

THE BLUE REVIEW

LITERATURE DRAMA ART MUSIC

CONTENTS

Poetry	Rupert Brooke, W.H. Davies, Iolo Aneurin Williams
Sister Barbara	Gilbert Cannan
Daibutsu	Yone Noguchi
Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel	
	John Middleton Murry
Ariadne in Naxos	Edward J. Dent
Epilogue III : Bains Turcs	Katherine Mansfield

CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

The Theatre (Masefield and Marie Lloyd), Gilbert Cannan ;
The Novels (Security and Adventure), Hugh Walpole ;
General Literature (Irish Plays and Playwrights), Frank Swinnerton ; *German Books* (Thomas Mann), D. H. Lawrence ; *Italian Books*, Sydney Waterlow ; *Music* (Elgar, Beethoven, Debussy), W. Denis Browne ; *The Galleries* (Gino Severini), O. Raymond Drey.

MARTIN SECKER PUBLISHER
NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET ADELPHI

The Imprint

June 17th, 1913

REPRODUCTIONS IN PHOTOGRAVURE
PIONEERS OF PHOTOGRAVURE : By DONALD
CAMERON-SWAN, F.R.P.S.

PLEA FOR REFORM OF PRINTING: By TYPOCLASTES
OLD BOOKS & THEIR PRINTERS: By J. ARTHUR HILL
EDWARD ARBER, F.S.A. : By T. EDWARDS JONES

THE PLAIN DEALER: VI. By EVERARD MEYNELL
DECORATION & ITS USES: VI. By EDWARD JOHNSTON
THE BOOK PRETENTIOUS AND OTHER REVIEWS:
By J. H. MASON

THE HODGMAN PRESS: By DANIEL T. POWELL
PRINTING & PATENTS: By GEO. H. RAYNER, R.P.A.
PRINTERS' DEVICES: By the Rev. T. F. DIBDIN. PART VI.
REVIEWS, NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

Price One Shilling net

Offices: 11 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

JULY

CONTENTS

		Page
Post Georgian	By X. Marcel Boulestin	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Love	By Rupert Brooke	149
The Busy Heart	By Rupert Brooke	150
Love's Youth	By W. H. Davies	151
When We are Old, are Old	By Iolo Aneurin Williams	152
Sister Barbara	By Gilbert Cannan	153
Daibutsu	By Yone Noguchi	160
Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel		
	By John Middleton Murry	164
Ariadne in Naxos	By Edward J. Dent	175
Epilogue : III. Bains Turcs	By Katherine Mansfield	181

CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

The Theatre : Masfield and Marie Lloyd		
	By Gilbert Cannan	186
The Novels : Security and Adventure	By Hugh Walpole	189
General Literature : Irish Plays and Playwrights		
	By Frank Swinnerton	194
German Books : Thomas Mann	By D. H. Lawrence	200
Italian Books	By Sydney Waterlow	207
The Galleries : Gino Severini	By O. Raymond Drey	213
Music : Beethoven, Elgar, Debussy	By W. Denis Browne	215

Editor : John Middleton Murry

Associate Editor : Katherine Mansfield

Editorial Office : 57 Chancery Lane, W.C.

Telephone 2132 Holborn

AP4
.B62
v.1
no.3

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

By JAMES ELROY FLECKER, Author of "Forty-two Poems,"
2s. 6d. net. Postage 2d. Ready June 30th.

Also an edition de luxe on handmade paper, numbered and signed by the Author. Limited to fifty copies. 7s. 6d. net.
Mr. Flecker's work is now eagerly looked for by all who really care for poetry and can appreciate what *The Nation* has described as his "strict and beautiful art." The new volume marks a fresh stage in Mr. Flecker's development, and contains some of his most striking verse. It has also been furnished with a preface on the present state of English Criticism, which is likely to attract considerable attention.

If you experience any difficulty in obtaining this book
send direct to the Publishers :

MAX GOSCHEN, LTD. ²⁰ GREAT RUSSELL
STREET, W.C.

COMPTON MACKENZIE'S Famous Novel

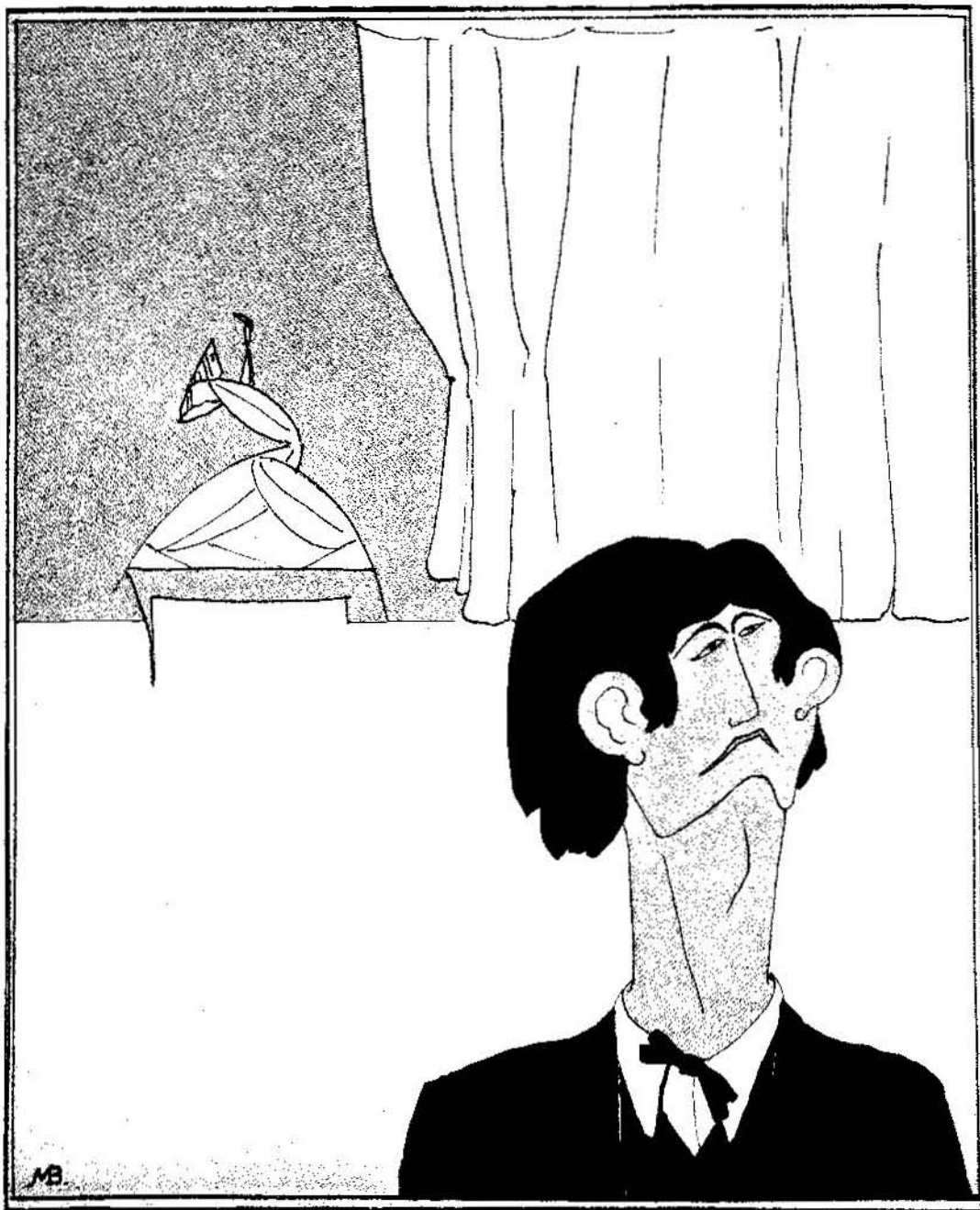
CARNIVAL

A new and cheaper edition of one of the most successful novels of recent years. Cover design by Norman Wilkinson. Ask for it at any bookstall.

One shilling net.

Postage 3d.

THIRTY-FIFTH THOUSAND



"Post Georgian "

By X. Marcel Boulestin

LOVE

Love is a breach in the walls, a broken gate,
Where that comes in that shall not go again ;
Love sells the proud heart's citadel to Fate.
They have known shame, who love unloved. Even then,
When two mouths, thirsty each for each, find slaking,
And agony's forgot, and hushed the crying
Of credulous hearts, in heaven—such are but taking
Their own poor dreams within their arms, and lying
Each in his lonely night, each with a ghost.
Some share that night. But they know love grows colder,
Grows false and dull, that was sweet lies at most.
Astonishment is no more in hand or shoulder,
But darkens, and dies out from kiss to kiss.
All this is love ; and all love is but this.

RUPERT BROOKE.



THE BUSY HEART

Now that we've done our best and worst, and parted,
I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.
(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end ;
Women with child, content ; and old men sleeping ;
And wet strong ploughlands, scarred for certain grain ;
And babes that weep, and so forget their weeping ;
And the young heavens, forgetful after rain ;
And evening hush, broken by homing wings ;
And Song's nobility, and Wisdom holy,
That live, we dead. I would think of a thousand things,
Lovely and durable, and taste them slowly,
One after one, like tasting a sweet food.
I have need to busy my heart with quietude.

RUPERT BROOKE.

LOVE'S YOUTH

Not only is my love a flower
That blooms in broad daylight,
But, like the Evening Primrose, it
Will bloom again at night.

Though I this day have reached my prime,
My heart's still fresh and young ;
I tremble at young Beauty's glance,
And love is still my song.

At thy bright smile I burn and shake,
Though treated as thy brother ;
Canst thou not see my eyes have twins
That laugh and call thee mother ?

WILLIAM H. DAVIES.

WHEN WE ARE OLD, ARE OLD

Age is a large, untidy hall
With a little fire and a draughty door,
Where the great beginnings of nothing-at-all
Hobnob on the littered floor.

And they chatter over the rags, the old,
With " 'This was a flaming kiss,'"
Or, " Men would dream were this thing told,
And men would weep were this."

And thither shall you and I come, too,
And walk in the chilly place ;
And I shall still be praising you,
Though the young men laugh in my face.

And the broken words of the once sweet tongue
Shall feel about in the gloom,
And echoes of all that we said when young
Go racketting round the room.

IOLO ANEURIN WILLIAMS.

GENERAL BRIERLEY had very definite ideas as to how a gentleman should live, and in the realisation of them had surrounded himself with many possessions, two houses, a wife, two daughters and a son who should follow in his footsteps. When he retired and found his income reduced by two-thirds, he clung to all his possessions, for without them he felt that he could not maintain his position as a gentleman. His son married early and wisely and, when his father looked to him for assistance in those difficulties which beset a gentleman, quarrelled with him, transferred himself to another regiment and went to India. Of the two daughters, one was pretty and attractive to men, and to her whims and desires the other, Barbara, was sacrificed. When the General's difficulties grew to such proportions that he had to rid himself of one of his possessions, he decided that Barbara must go out into the world to earn her living. She had had only the most foolish kind of education and possessed no craft nor art nor marketable accomplishment. Further, she was a lady and therefore cut off from the practice of many trades. She was very religious and solved the problem by returning to a girlish aspiration and becoming a nun. She thought no ill of her father, who protested his affection and bemoaned their harsh necessity. He took her to the station and paid for her third-class ticket.

II

She was in the convent for eleven years. In the beginning she found it a little difficult to fall in with the monotonous routine of the place and to overcome her repulsion from the rough domestic labours which she had to undertake. She learned to cook and sew and darn and mend and clean, and when she was entrusted with the care of the children her education began. Her refinement and sensitiveness made her successful with them and little by little the Mother Superior promoted her to full control of that part of

The Blue Review

the convent's activity. She was so absorbed and busy that she had little time for thought of the outside world and she rarely communicated with her family. She heard that her sister was married—"a splendid position"—and wrote to congratulate her. Then she did not write again for years. She was neither very happy nor very unhappy : her busy life left no room for violent variations of moral temperature and she was puzzled and distressed by the emotional fervour which some of the sisters brought to the practice of their religion.

The convent belonged to a world-wide sisterhood, and twice the Mother Superior sent Sister Barbara over to houses in France and Belgium. She displayed excellent tact and business capacity and the supreme authority marked her out for diplomatic missions. Far rather would she have stayed with her children, but obedience was an element in her vow and she obeyed. She was sent to New York, to South Africa, to Manila, and she saw the activity of the outside world and was excited by it. She counted her excitement for a sin and her conscience scourged her, but it was not long before she saw that the business organisation of the sisterhood was neither better nor worse than other commercial undertakings, and therefore in flat contradiction to the principles of religion. In the simplicity and directness of her nature she hated to have her life broken up into two portions, between profession and practice.

When she consulted the Mother Superior on her scruples, she was told that the Mother Church must be maintained and had to fight for her existence : was she not the Church Militant ? Sister Barbara procured a promise that she should not be sent abroad again for some time, and she returned to her children. Then, however, she found herself thinking of them in a new way. Not as little units in the Church, but as individuals, who would grow up and go out into the warm, bright, multi-coloured movement of the world. It was that, or the pure white radiance of the cloistered life. But the cloistered life, as she could not but admit to herself, was neither pure nor white.

Sister Barbara

A girl who had come to the convent to hide away from her grief and shame in an unhappy love-affair, confided in her, told all the story of her love. She did not tell the truth and it was not a beautiful story, but there was warmth in it and a tiny spasm of passion. It filled Sister Barbara's thoughts and she was very unhappy. She found herself going over the eleven years, wiping them out as though they had never been and living again in her father's house. If she had stayed . . . If she had stayed ? . . .

She told the Mother Superior that she must return. There was no room for argument : she must return to the world.

III

She found no welcome. Nothing had changed in her home. Still her father was spending twice his income. Still her mother was ruled by her sister, who had left her husband and taken up her old position at home, filling the house with men, young and old, seeking pleasure at every turn. She found no welcome. They were in the midst of a financial crisis and by way of retrenchment had dismissed two of their servants. The cook demanded more wages and was dismissed. Barbara undertook the cooking and the housekeeping. The waste, the extravagance offended her, and she could not but try to reform the household. The greatest leakage was through her sister, who always seemed to have money for her every whim. Where before she was indulged on the prospect of a successful marriage, now she was humoured on the score of her conjugal failure. She was still spoiled and pretty and there was no alteration in her character or her conduct. Barbara found her father every day more pompously querulous, her mother more foolish, her sister self-willed and thoughtless. Accustomed as she was to the acute economy of the convent, the thriftlessness of this household appalled her and she could not see how a catastrophe had been averted. Her father did not know either, but he supposed that the danger would be avoided as others had been avoided before. Certain reforms Barbara was able to accomplish. On the

The Blue Review

strength of them her father bought a motor-car, which her sister monopolised.

More even than her changes, Barbara's family resented her competence and thoroughness. A storm gathered, grew, broke and Barbara's mother declared that one or other of the sisters must leave the house. It was Barbara who went, and she took a room in a cheap Bloomsbury boarding-house, her father making her an allowance of one pound a week until she should be in a position to maintain herself. She set herself to learn type-writing and shorthand, and often she told herself that it had been folly to leave the convent, that life in the world was impossible and mean and dull. Her co-inhabitants in the boarding-house were all in as poor a plight as she, and they were shy and awkward with each other or took refuge in the traditional humour of the place.

When she had mastered her new work she was faced with the impossibility of finding a situation. Always the youth or prettiness of her competitors thrust her into the background. She took herself in hand, watched other women for the tricks she had forgotten or never acquired, recollected her sister's ways for the details and subtle refinements which had gone to the making of her charm. She imitated these things but despised them because they were not part of herself. Her luck did not turn and she began to think that something of the nunnery must cling about her. She was too vigorous to feel that her age might be a handicap.

In four months she had not earned a penny and her family seemed completely to have forgotten her, except that once her sister drove up in the motor-car and left her a parcel of clothes that "might be useful to her." She saw the car as she was coming wearily home in the afternoon and waited until her sister had gone.

Three days later she had the excitement of finding a letter on her plate at breakfast. The other boarders eyed her as she opened it. She felt them watching her and gave no sign, folded it up and laid it on the table. It was short, and a bare statement from her mother that her father was so straitened for money that it would

Sister Barbara

be impossible to continue her allowance. . . . In her purse she had five shillings and threepence halfpenny. She gulped down her breakfast and one by one the other boarders went away until she was left alone except for the quiet man with the brown eyes who always sat at the other end of the table. With her eyes staring in front of her she sat and she felt hard and withered. It was the tone of her mother's letter that had hurt her so, that she could hardly realise its contents.

The quiet man came towards her, stood by her side and said :

" We seem to be in the same boat. I should like to be able to help you."

She resented his intrusion but she could make no reply. Even an impertinence was something to fill the emptiness about and within her. He went on :

" You can't talk about trouble straight off. At least, I can't. Will you dine with me to-night at the Tellier in Soho ? You can get a very good dinner there for a shilling."

She looked up at him and there was a twinkle in his eyes and much friendliness. A shilling dinner seemed a good joke and instinctively they agreed to laugh at it together, and so use it to brush aside awkwardness and embarrassment and the savage egoism of loneliness.

Yes. She would dine with him that night at seven.

" I, too," he said, " am going to look for work."

That also was a joke and it appealed to her as a humorous coincidence that another creature should spend the day in looking for work.

The day passed quickly and she was punctual, to find him waiting for her at the Tellier.

" Any luck ? " he said.

" No."

" Neither had I. How much money have you got ? ' "

" Five shillings."

" I have fourteen and sixpence. We'd better pool it and then it will go farther for both of us."

The Blue Review

She agreed and he said :

" Now I'll tell you my story. I was married until a year ago. I was in business in Leicestershire and we had a fine house, land, horses, people we called friends and all that. I'd been married eight years. For various reasons, the most fundamental of which were probably physical and therefore impossible for my wife to face, we drifted apart, so far that we shared nothing but the habit of marriage. That was deadly. My wife couldn't or wouldn't see it and was outraged when I suggested a separation. She didn't want to lose her position. She cared about the people we called friends and the money and the house, and as I couldn't make her see the reason for throwing it all up and trying another arrangement, in a fit of desperation I said she could keep all that if she'd only let me go. She couldn't see why I wanted to go, but she did feel that to keep me might be dangerous, so she agreed to that. I kept my word. I took just enough to keep me for a year, for I had an idea the best thing for me was to make my own way and not to go on living padded in with stocks and shares in other people's work. I cut away pretty thoroughly, perhaps too thoroughly. Anyhow, here I am. I haven't got any work. I shan't be able to pay my rent, but I'd rather sleep on the Embankment than appeal to anyone for money. The only thing I miss is the horses. I walk in the Park sometimes and hate the people who have got them."

She told her story.

" The only thing I miss is the children. I was always learning from them. You know, growing."

" I know."

He took her hand in his.

That night they walked miles through the streets of London.

She was the first to procure work at thirty shillings a week, and with the confidence this gave her she pocketed her pride and worried her father's distinguished and busy friends until they gave her extra work in the evenings. Upon that she took three

Sister Barbara

rooms in a shabby district, high up with a view of Hampstead from her windows. She saw her friend every day. Every night they dined together and very soon, through her, he too obtained a situation. They pooled all their earnings and it was at her suggestion that he came to lodge in her rooms.

For long they hovered in the outer dreamland of unspoken love, but love was theirs and would not be denied. Out of their misery grew wonders and they were born again, his old life and hers lost in the new life they had together builded.

Often they walk together in the park and gaze at the horses, and every penny they can save is put by for the purchase of a little house in the country where they can keep a horse and trap. That is all his desire and with his happiness she will be content.

DAIBUTSU By YONE NOGUCHI

THE valley, a snug basin forgotten by consciousness, was filled with the autumnal sunlight of gold, which shone up to the tremendous face of Daibutsu (famous holiness at Kamakura) who, like thought touched by emotion, appeared as if vibrating ; Nature there was in the last stage of all evolution, having her energy and strength vaporised into repose. The trees, flowers and grasses in the sacred ground calmed down, to speak somewhat hyperbolically, into the state of Nirvana. The thought that I was a sea-tossed boat even with all oars broken, formed itself then in my mind ; it was natural I felt at once that it was the only place, at least in Japan, where my sea-wounded heart would soon be healed by the virtue of my own prayer, and by the air mist-purple filling the valley most voluptuously. I cannot forget my impression when I heard there the evening bell ring out and the voice of sutra-reading from the temple, and how I lost my human thirst and pride, becoming a faint soul, a streak of scent or a wisp of sigh ; I was a song itself which grew out from my confession. Such was my first impression on finding myself in Daibutsu's ground, the haven of peace and heavenly love all by itself, soon after I returned home from my long foreign sojourn, that is quite many years ago now ; but it seems it was only yesterday that I, like a thousand waves hurrying toward the Yuigahana shore of Kamakura, hurried to Daibutsu with my own soul of wave-like song of prayer ; can our human souls ever be more than the waves of the sea ?

It was the next summer that I had many many more occasions to lay my body and soul under the blessing of Daibutsu's valley (Oh, what a scent that is the Lord Buddha's !) as I had many weeks to spend there at Kamakura : Summer, the month of my love, with the burning ecstasy that would soon be intensified into the greyness of Oriental desolation. I like the Summer heat, you understand, not from the fact of heat itself, but from the reason we have to thank its presence for the sweetening of the shadows of trees, where I will build, while looking at the delicious white

Daibutsu

feet of passing breezes, my own kingdom with sighing ; to speak plainly, dream old Kamakura of the Middle Age, that is, of art and religious faith. To-day, it is in truth a common sort of country town of modern Japan, of stereotyped pattern with others ; if there is a difference, it is only in its appearing less individual and far sadder because it has had such a great history, when we observe that its general ambition now points toward commercialism. But it is during those summer weeks only that we can fairly well connect it with the old art and prayer, let me say, with the true existence of Daibutsu the wonder, as we see then with our living eyes the thousand pilgrims in white cotton, bamboo mushroom hats on head and holy staff in hand, and sacred little bells around their waists (what desolate voices of bells !) swarming here mainly to kneel before Daibutsu from every corner of the country where all winds come from ; I was glad to see the whole town religiously changed at once. How often I found myself with those pilgrims, muttering the holy words in Daibutsu's valley, where the nature, not unlike that of the former October of rest, was in all its spiritual asceticism with repentance and belief ; the gigantic divinity in bronze, of folded hands and inclined head in heavenly meditation, over whom time and change (summer heat, of course) have no power to stir its silence, is self-denial itself. Oh, let my heart burn in storm and confession like the hearts of a thousand cicadas whose songs almost shake the valley and trees ; we might get the spiritual ascendancy out of physical exhaustion ; it makes at least one step nearer our salvation. The autumnal rest or silence can only be gained after having all the summer heart-cry ; isn't Daibutsu's self-denial the heart-cry strengthened into silence ?

There is in this statue a great subtlety, speaking of it as a creation of art, which might result, let me define it arbitrarily, from a good balance of the masses of idealism and what we generally understand as realism ; as the latter is indeed so slight, even our modern imagination whose rush is always proved to be disturbing, has enough room here to play to its content. The proof

The Blue Review

that the said idealism and realism melt into one another in such a perfection is clearly seen in its external monotony, or, let me say, in its utter sacrifice of gross effect ; while it, on the other hand, has gained the inward richness most magically. To call it an accident is not quite satisfactory, although I do not know how far it is explained by saying that it is the realisation of magic or power of prayer which our ancestors placed in bronze ; there is no denying, I think, that it is the work of prayer to a great measure. Tradition says :

It was Itano no Tsubone, one of the waiting ladies to Shogun Yoritomo, who undertook, when he passed away with unfulfilled desire to have an object of worship at Kamakura, his own capital, similar to the Daibutsu at Nara, to collect a general contribution and fund, with the assistance of the priest Joko ; the first image which was of wood was finished in 1238 or the first year of Rekinin. She was again called to action, when in the autumn of the second year of Hoji (1248) the image, also the chapel, was overthrown by a storm, this time assisted by the Shogun Prince Munetaka, and successfully restored the image in bronze. The artist who executed it was Goroyemon Ono of Yanamura of the Kadzusa province.

Putting aside the question who was Ono and Itano no Tsubone, the significant point is that it was created by a thousand people whose religious longing and hope were fulfilled in this Daibutsu. It is not our imagination alone to think that the statue lives as it is the real force of prayer ; when we see it, we build the most musical relation one with another at once, because we forget ourselves in one soul and body, we might say, in one sound and one colour, perfectly wedded with it. After all, it is nothing but our own emotion and yearning personified.

I believe that it might not have been so great an art as it is if it had been made in our day, mainly because it would express too delicate details ; and the temple light from the opening of the doors, when it used to stand within, must have often played with it unjustly. But it became a great art when the storm and tidal

Daibutsu

waves destroyed the temple and washed the statue in 1355 and again in 1526, and left it without ever since, with the rustling trees behind, the light and winds crawling up and down, against whose undecidedness its eternal silence would be doubly forcible. Is it not that our human souls often grow beautiful under the baptism of misfortune and grief ? So Nature once unkind to the statue proves to be a blessing to-day ; it looms with far greater divinity out of the rain, wind, lights of sun and moon, whose subtle contribution it fully acknowledges. Where are the foolish people who wish to build the temple again to put the image in ?

MR. BENNETT, STENDHAL AND THE MODERN NOVEL
By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

IT may easily seem impertinent for one who has no claim to the title of novelist, whose writings in all would make only a slender book, to criticise an article upon "Writing Novels" by Mr. Arnold Bennett, who might with reason claim to be a representative English novelist, whose writings are encyclopædic in volume and variety. It may seem particularly impertinent, when, as is actually the case, the article in question is among the best of the multifarious deliverances of the author upon the science and practice of the writer's craft. It is, however, exactly this extremity of impertinence which is in itself the justification of the critical attitude in a writer of the younger generation; for if the younger generation (for which, even though it be probably non-existent, I am the self-constituted spokesman) has ideas or principles to put forward which are to govern its own attitude towards such an important literary question as the essentials of the great novel, no better occasion could be found than the presentation by one of the most accomplished novelists of the present day of his own matured conceptions of the subject. In brief, I wish to use Mr. Arnold Bennett's article as a *point d'appui* for my own considerations upon the novel, not as an object of critical attack.

"J'appartiens," as Charles Louis Philippe wrote to Barrès in 1903, "à une génération qui n'a pas encore passé par les livres"; and for this reason though my ideas can have but little authority, I am in equally little danger of finding my theory confronted and shattered by my practice.

With Mr. Arnold Bennett's obiter dicta I have but little concern. They are generally illuminating; and they are evidence of a breadth of reading which must be rare among modern novelists in England, if we may judge by their production. There are, however, two statements in the article which touch the very vitals of the modern conception of narrative fiction, and these must be examined; for it is probable that in the analysis may be found

Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel

some reason for the conviction that modern English novelists are on the wrong track.

There is the simple flavour of an axiom in the assertion that "The novelist is he who has seen life and is so excited by it that he absolutely must transmit the vision to others. . . . Only he differs from most artists in this, that what most chiefly strikes him is the indefinable humanness of human nature, the large general manner of existing." The fundamental of the great novelist is "to have an impassioned vision of life." It is so concise and so vague that it seems to be self-evident. It is hardly fruitful. To feel passionately about life is characteristic of a great many people other than novelists. The philosopher, the politician, above all, the social reformer, feel very passionately about life. The feeling is certainly the very germ of the social reformer's activity, and in order to feed the flame of his passionate feeling, he finds it necessary to comprehend more and more of the whole of life, by using algebraical symbols for its constituent parts.

Not only does the social reformer's passionate feeling about life burst through the fetters he has imposed upon himself by his unit-treatment of individuals, but this very process is essential to prolong and intensify his passion. By it he includes infinitely more in his vision. Yet no one would for a moment doubt that the comprehensive passion of the social reformer is something which differs not only in degree, but in kind, from the consciousness of the novelist. Life is a simple word, and a very big word; and it is easy to convince yourself that you have said something very profound when you have made a simple assertion about life. Just as we object to one novelist who tells us "Life is all very jolly, if you only knew," that he doesn't know very much about it; so we object when another novelist tells us that the essential to a great novel is a passionate vision of life. It is so vague that it is meaningless; if it means anything, the expression of that meaning is to be sought in social propaganda, and not in the novel.

The great novelist is passionately interested in individuals.

The Blue Review

Take the three who are, in my opinion, the greatest, Stendhal, Tolstoy, and Dostoievsky. They are remembered by their creation of great individual characters, Sanseverina, Anna Karenin, Raskolnikoff; and it is characteristic of such created individuals that they cannot be recognised in "real life." I never hope to meet a Sanseverina, a Comte de Mosca, or a Mlle. de la Mole. However limited in its field were my passionate feeling about life I should never find any individuals who represented in themselves so completely the highest possibilities of humanity. Their supreme individuality is the novelist's creation, coming from the novelist's own brain, in a certain vague sense the "objectification" of his own personality. The work of the great novelist consists in the creation of such characters, not in recognising them in life, for they cannot be recognised, and even if it were by a miracle possible, the artist could never "get inside" them and retain his power of conscious analysis in the very act of their willing and feeling. Yet these characters are the end and justification of the novelist; in them we acknowledge the greatness of the great novelist.

In creating one of these supreme individuals the novelist seems to reveal something of the human soul, and the essence of revelation is to tell us something that we did not know before. The point at which we begin to appreciate the creation is the point at which our own knowledge of the human soul is exhausted. We follow the hero to a crisis in tense intellectual and emotional excitement and we are nonplussed, knowing nothing of how he will act, how he will feel or develop. We could, were we in the frame of mind, suggest alternative lines of action, yet none is inevitable; the logic which we obey is the logic of the type, and we are dealing with an individual. The great novelist takes a line of action or of feeling, either among the alternatives we ourselves might have imagined or something completely outside our reckoning; and from the very moment it is chosen we see its inevitability. We recognise the good logic, which, as Stendhal says, is at the bottom of every genius. Looking back in the newly

Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel

created light we can see wherein the character possessed real individuality, wherein he differed from the type to which we momentarily assimilated him. In the individuality of the character lies its humanity, not in its approximation to type; and the creation of an individual character is a revelation of humanity, an addition to the knowledge of the human heart.

If it is possible in any degree to discover the conditions of this revelation we may be reasonably certain that in them is to be found something essential to the greatest achievement in narrative fiction. Accepting as we do, though in a restricted sense, that the revelation must be in the last resort the author's revelation of himself, the novelist must be what Taine called Stendhal, *un esprit supérieur*. If he is to follow the analysis of the finest sentiments and emotions of the finest individuals beyond what we already know to a point at which we are dazzled by the illumination suddenly cast upon a human mind, then he must be of this fine mould himself, with an infinite capacity for analysing his own consciousness with definiteness and lucidity. There is a hint of snobbishness in the term *esprit supérieur*; but the snobbishness corresponds to a reality, for a capacity for self-analysis is the accompaniment of the conviction that the self is fine and important. Aristocracy of the intellect is inevitable in a great novelist. "J'ai horreur du bas peuple," says Stendhal in one form or another throughout his *Journal* and his autobiography; but Stendhal is not horrified because the proletariat is dirty and does not foregather in salons, but because it is "infiniment plat," ineffably dull. The novelist cannot be interested in chrysalis humanity. When Tolstoy abandoned this attitude, he abandoned also the writing of masterpieces. Dostoievsky was aristocratic by reason of his very infirmity; and we know from the opening chapters of the "House of the Dead" how congenial he found the *bas peuple* of Siberia.

Aristocracy of the intellect is no less inevitable in the created character. Apart from the fact that the relation of the creation to the creator is definite it is impossible to reveal the human heart

The Blue Review

unless a character is chosen which is itself the realisation of some of the finest possibilities of humanity. The power of rational analysis of motive and action, a clear vision of the working of his own mind,—these are the capacities which belong to the fine character. The working of instinct, or rather the unconsciousness that it is instinct which is working, is typical of a lower plane of existence, in which the novelist cannot find the elements of his supreme individuals. For a revelation of the human soul in a character of fiction demands what philosophers call the continuity of the self, and demands that this continuity should be made explicit. Throughout its development the soul must be self-conscious, analysing its motives and feelings, making the psychological evolution plain to us at the same time that we are carried to a point beyond our knowledge and learn more than we knew of the human heart. If instinct breaks into this continuity the hero must be conscious of the fact that it is instinct which breaks in, for to interrupt the evolution of a soul by some unconscious instinctive reaction, would be like interrupting a chain of good mathematical reasoning by the assertion that $2 + 2 = 5$. Once continuity is lost the creation is annihilated. Not a step can be omitted in the *bonne logique au fond de tout génie*. It is plain then that this continuity of consciousness cannot be expressed in any character save one of an "aristocratic" type. It is not an aristocracy of externals (though it is worth remembering that what I consider to be the finest novel ever written, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, is in such a setting), but an aristocracy of soul, and the character must have realised the main elements of this lofty possibility before the action begins. Otherwise whence can the internal lucidity of consciousness, which makes the working of a soul clear, be derived? We need to see the character *in the very act* of willing and feeling; and we are grown a little tired of watching our modern novelists urge their undistinguished puppets to an unattainable perfection. Even the half-instinctive gropings of the half-distinguished in divine discontent with the existing social

Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel

order have lost their fascination for us ; and perhaps we were asking a question of a more critical importance than we knew when we asked Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett where it was all leading to. We were impatient that their characters should realise themselves and begin. So much of modern novel writing amounts to nothing more than a mere skirmish with preliminaries. Sparring is all very well, and helps to make the fighter fit to battle for world's championships ; but too much sparring is not only tedious, as habitués of the Wonderland know, but destroys the ability to fight in real earnest. Perhaps our novelists have spent so much time in sparring that they have forgotten, if they ever knew, how to fight.

One of the manifestations of sparring which we deplore in modern novelists is the preoccupation with the lower middle-class *as such*. This preoccupation, never more in evidence than it is at the present, is probably due to two influences — the prevalence of autobiographical fiction, and the fact that the greater part of modern intellectual unrest centres in the middle classes. Autobiographical fiction is not only the result of an entirely false deduction from the constant relation between the writer and the created character, but an evidence of an extraordinary self conceit ; for in the first place the fact that a writer is bound to create from his own experience does not, cannot, mean that he merely records the things that he saw and felt in the surroundings and the circumstances in which he actually saw and felt them. After all, the essential of the great novel is *creation*. In the second place, to consider that the order, the circumstances and the time in which his experiences occurred to him bears the mark of the finger of God so manifestly that his reader will be bound to consider his autobiography a creation, is an unwarrantable piece of conceit. As to the intellectual unrest of the middle classes, it is very probably true that the insurgence of individuality against the tradition of the family and the obtaining social order is more active here than elsewhere in society. The problem of the family

The Blue Review

is certainly more acute in the middle classes. But that is in itself no reason why the gropings of the emergent individual towards the larger life, the helpless shaking of despairing hands before a freedom half-experienced, should be the recurrent theme of the modern novel. At any rate, if we are to be kept in the middle classes, and there is not the slightest reason why we should not be, we have a right to expect that the characters should be the " aristocrats " of their own class, *esprits supérieurs*. Why are we continually presented with the spectacle of human beings wavering between unconsciousness and consciousness, much as though the finest intellectual development of humanity were held to be the psychology of a child of three ? The reason is as difficult to fathom as it is certain that such characters absolutely preclude the achievement of the finest results of which the novel is capable. Such a conception of the novel leads nowhere and the stigma of loutishness is printed on the books. They deal with the hobbledehoy of modern society. They are hobbledehoy books. There is a touch of vulgarity inseparable from such characters and such books ; and we resent the caricature of humanity even more than the vulgarity. It is time we had passed on to the grown man, developed not in stature nor in status, but in mind, the man of whom a true hero can be made.

It would be useless to deny that the tendency of modern fiction, and that too of a generation later than Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett, is against me, and it is probable that the question will be raised : " To which generation do you belong, and on whose behalf do you speak ? " I can only reply with the phrase of Ch-Louis Philippe which I have used before. It is a virtue, as I count virtue to-day, not to have written a novel at the age of twenty-three. An age which is so richly endowed as the present with critics prolific in visions of promise is a superheated atmosphere for the nascent novelist. His flowering is sudden and his decay catastrophic ; and though it ill befits a writer of the youngest generation to indulge in unctuous proverbs concerning stony

Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel

ground, it is certain that the novelists to-day are legion who have lost the opportunity of something which they will never capture through their lack of restraint in production. Seeing that there is a yearly production of over two thousand novels, and that the young novelist is modestly content to acknowledge that he does not as yet write as well as the dozen writers who have arrived, it is so easy for any young man of parts to write a novel better, a great deal better, than the average, that it is almost as certain that he will get a great conceit of himself from the critics, as that the critics will groan in mechanical raptures concerning the permanence of his ephemeral work. It would probably be a great deal more fortunate if the young writer to-day had to face the uncomprehending but sturdy bludgeonings of Jeffreys instead of the sickening eulogy of the newspaper reviewers.

The temptations in the path of the young writer are manifold. Autobiographical fiction saves him the trouble of writing a novel at all ; uncritical criticism saves him the trouble of writing a second ; for the second is written rather to satisfy the expectations of a publisher, and the exigences of a custom requiring at the writer's hands one novel a year, than to prove to himself that he had any gift or the grit to realise it. Now a third chasm yawns in the path. Mr. Arnold Bennett sings like a siren in *The English Review* his seductively ambiguous music to lure the young generation to its complete destruction. " As the years pass I attach less and less importance to technique in fiction. . . . I begin to think that the great masters of fiction are by the nature of their art ordained to be more or less amateurs. . . . I do not know why it should be so, unless because in the exuberance of their power they are impatient of the exactitudes of systematic study and the mere bother of repeated attempts to arrive at a minor perfection." With the point which Mr. Bennett is anxious to make in these ill-considered words we are in absolute agreement. When we compare the novels of Jane Austen with the masterpieces of Tolstoy, Dostoievsky or Stendhal, we are immediately conscious that there

The Blue Review

is in *Emma* a compact perfection of form against which *The Brothers Karamazov* or even *La Chartreuse de Parme* seem loose-ended, if not actually clumsy. This is a fact which cannot be disputed, even as the fact that these loose-ended novels are *the* masterpieces of narrative fiction cannot be disputed, and it is necessary for the critic to seek some reason for this loss of form in the novelists to whom we owe the supreme creations. But it is absolutely misleading when Mr. Bennett attributes this to an "amateurishness" inevitable in a master, or "to the great novelists' impatience of the exactitudes of systematic study, or the mere bother of repeated attempts to arrive at a minor perfection." Tolstoy and Stendhal were painstaking craftsmen. I believe, though I have no other than internal evidence, that Dostoievsky was continually striving after perfection of form. Stendhal, we know, after reading the criticism of Balzac that he had no style, re-wrote the whole of *La Chartreuse* in a *style plus Balzacien*, and rejected the result. He was preoccupied with questions of style and form ; and the repeated notes in the margin of the unfinished *Vie de Henri Brulard*, "*pas de style soutenu*," "*style un peu plus soutenu*," to guide him in the revision which he never accomplished, are proof positive that "amateurishness" at least is not to be charged to the masters of the novel. The cause is rather to be sought in the very nature of the subject matter of the great novel.

It has been already urged at considerable length that the novelist is passionately interested in individuals and that his achievement consists in the creation of "superior souls." The creation of an individual demands that he should be presented in his full individuality ; and we know without awaiting the corroboration of the philosophers that this full individuality consists not least in relations with other individuals, and the individuality of these others in their relations with others till the whole structure of society is bound together with the created character. The novelist—herein lies the truth of his passionate feeling about life—detaches a portion of the web of relations which

Mr. Bennett, Stendhal and the Modern Novel

constitute life, because it assumes for him an overwhelming importance, and inevitably in the portion detached there are a certain number of loose ends which, throughout the novel, suggest the relation to a world beyond. If he neatly rounds off every end, gives everyone his entrance and his exit within the compass of the novel itself, the inevitable result seems to be a microcosm, such as Jane Austen's. But the supreme novelist, being among other things a supremely honest man, by the very honesty of the severance, suggests that there is another world closely bound with that he creates, and for all he knows, equally valuable and equally capable of expression. The great novels are loose-ended because absolute truth is incompatible with the smaller perfection. We enjoy the microcosm that Jane Austen gives us, though we realise to the full that she is ultimately to be regarded as second-rate. The pessimistic Turgenev had perfection of form because perhaps the finest expression of pessimism is to tie all the ends of life together. In his books there is nothing out of perspective, and consequently he never achieves that final creation of character that is in the greatest novels. It is difficult exactly to express this conviction of mine in reading Turgenev. It may be vaguely conveyed by saying that he is faultless as regards the perspective of the individual work of art, but ignores the perspective of spiritual values which seems to transcend the more academic virtues of craftsmanship. The great novelist practises these virtues so long as they are compatible with spiritual truth.

Discarding, then, Mr. Bennett's insidious suggestion of "amateurishness" as a characteristic of the great novelist, we will complete our viaticum for the youngest generation by including our results in a hard saying. He must be an *esprit supérieur*; he must create *esprits supérieurs*; he must strive for perfection of form so long as it is compatible with spiritual truth. These commandments are so little in accord with modern practice that it would seem consummate temerity to press our analysis of the great novel yet further. It is, however, impossible

The Blue Review

to resist the impulse to define the subject matter of the supreme novel even more closely. I think that such novels must deal with the history of a love-passion ; for that is the passion which intensifies a man's humanity to the uttermost. (The possession of an *esprit supérieur*, being man's highest realisation of himself, is his humanity.) Other passions curtail this humanity to varying degrees, and bring him in one respect or another nearer to the beasts that perish. Thus though Old Goriot's passionate affection for his daughters impresses us, we are repelled at the same moment, considering that he is a monomaniac. Similarly we conceive that a passion for power would dehumanise a man. On the other hand a man's love-passion for a woman brings his consciousness to its highest level and maintains it at that level longest. Moreover, there is always immanent in such a passion a sense of approaching tragedy, for it is by its very nature never wholly secure. But the love-passion of the supreme novel must be that of an *esprit supérieur* for an *esprit supérieur* ; for on a lower level of humanity the passion itself becomes grosser, and lessens rather than intensifies a man's humanity. The love-passions of the hobbledehoy books are not love-passions at all ; they are best described by the misused word Sex, and merit all the vituperation bestowed on that word by the *New Age*, which, however, not seldom has the misfortune to include and condemn the higher with the lower. I do not wish to suggest that the novel should be restricted to the history of a love passion—that is the limited sphere of its highest triumphs—but rather to record my conviction that the great novelist of the future will be like the great novelist of the past, a superior spirit creating superior spirits, striving after perfection of form so long as it is compatible with absolute spiritual truth, and achieving his supreme creation in the history of a love passion. If this were the critical instrument in common use to-day, how many of the first-born would be spared, and how many of the adults held in honour ?

ANYONE who has ever attempted to learn a foreign language, anyone who has attained a considerable proficiency in it, knows that the most difficult and elusive chapter of his task is the comprehension of foreign humour. There are, of course, certain things which are comic in any language and perhaps to any temperament. Jokes which are primitive and direct we can all understand, and to an Englishman who knows German pretty well, there is a certain amusement to be derived from such literary humour as the parody in German of some classic German author. But supposing that we are confronted with, say, a German parody of a French or Italian author, the difficulty is horribly complicated. We may be quite familiar with the original French or Italian, we may be fluent German scholars ; but there still remains a new effort to be made, and one that demands a peculiar agility of mind. We have got to realise not only what our French author signifies to us, but what he signifies to the average German mind ; and we often are inclined to feel that not only is the effort irksome, but that it is not worth the trouble of making.

The curious entertainment presented a month ago at His Majesty's Theatre under the title of *Ariadne in Naxos* gives unlimited scope to those who care to try psychological experiments of this kind. *Ariadne in Naxos* is an opera performed by order of M. Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Before we can understand *Ariadne*, then, we must understand M. Jourdain ; not, however, Molière's M. Jourdain, or what we English people think to be Molière's M. Jourdain, but M. Jourdain as seen by Herr von Hoffmannsthal, and perhaps Herr von Hoffmannsthal's M. Jourdain as seen by Mr. Maugham and Sir Herbert Tree.

Fortunately, however, this is not really the case. It is quite evident that this so-called " M. Jourdain " is a man of straw. What the author and composer wanted was an " induction " and nothing more—that is, an apology for their opera, so as to disarm criticism by the suggestion that what was apparently serious was

The Blue Review

really meant to be comic, or *vice versa*. Hoffmannsthal is well read in English literature, and is no doubt as familiar with *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* as he is with *The Taming of the Shrew* ; it is quite possible, too, that he is acquainted with the old Italian *Don Giovanni* opera which Mozart's clever librettist adapted to his own uses. Having borrowed poor M. Jourdain to serve the purpose of a Christopher Sly, the author and composer soon saw that it could be easy and effective from the ordinary manager's point of view to keep the most broadly comic scenes, and introduce a liberal dose of incidental music ; moreover, M. Jourdain having held the stage both in France and in Germany for a couple of centuries, those of the audience who might be bored with the opera could at least be sure of having a good deal of fun for their money out of a tabloid arrangement of Molière.

The plain fact remains, however, that in this entertainment Molière does not count artistically at all. M. Jourdain has no more appropriateness to Strauss' opera, even as a Christopher Sly, than he would have to *Fanny's First Play* ; if an induction is wanted at all, it must be an induction of our own times. The dressing up of prologue and opera in seventeenth century costume and language is merely an ingenious way of escape from the difficulties which would ensue if the problem presented was taken seriously.

Hoffmannsthal, like a great many literary and artistic people at the present day, has fallen in love with the baroque. We are all rather sick of Ruskin and St. Pancras station ; we are all beginning to think it rather amusing to play with ideas which our elders considered to be in bad taste. And it so happens that Hoffmannsthal by way of being original, has just discovered that the English theatre of the seventeenth century produced at least one immortal masterpiece—Otway's *Venice Preserved*. Here let me say that Hoffmannsthal, as a clever German, has a real and serious advantage over us English people ; he probably does not see much difference between the fine poetry and the mere bombast that are both to be found in the serious scenes, and although he can hardly appreciate

Ariadne in Naxos

the innermost flavour of the comic scenes, he at any rate has probably no scruple whatever (his version of the play is known to me only at second hand) in translating them literally, whereas in England the fantastic humours of Nacky and her Antonio have been banished from the stage since the days of George II.

As a matter of fact the jumble of high tragedy and low comedy for which Hoffmannsthal so highly commends Otway was to be found in practically every Italian opera libretto of Otway's period. Moreover, the comic episodes of the Italian operas were certainly influenced to some extent by the Comedy of Masks—the extemporised comedies of Harlequin and Pantaloon, which were acted at every village fair. *Ariadne* then, it might be inferred, is really a parody of seventeenth-century Italian opera. Well, it is just such a parody as might be written by a man who had read some casual dictionary article about Italian opera and the Comedy of Masks, but had never given a moment's study to the very copious documents that remain, or even to the very copious literature about them. It is just possible that a clever composer with an antiquarian turn of mind and a keen sense of real scholarship, such as is extremely rare in Germany, might have set Hoffmannsthal's *Ariadne* to a fairly amusing parody of old Italian music : but I cannot see that it would have been worth the trouble, given the fact that a modern audience knows nothing of the style parodical. And even if it had been worth while, there surely was never a composer less fitted for the task than Richard Strauss.

Now the sense of fine scholarship is by no means the first test of a really great composer. Or rather, a great composer may possess it, but does not make a parade of it, because the essential greatness of his thought and the clearness of his expression form a style of their own. On the other hand, the moment a composer wishes either to imitate or to parody some other composer's style, the sense of scholarship becomes indispensable. It is a quality which few composers of operas can afford to do without, since it is only the very greatest who can sustain the interest of an opera without

The Blue Review

recourse to local colour, or some analogous device. Strauss is not one of these. In spite of all his cleverness, in spite of moments of real greatness, there is hardly a work of his which does not break down somewhere from want of scholarship. As long as Strauss is writing his own serious and strenuous style, his cacophony and even his coarseness of thought can be forgiven him. It is in his moments of would-be simplicity and popularity that he is utterly intolerable. The most horrible instance of all, perhaps, occurs in *Salome*, where by way of contrast to the perversities of Herod and his court the first followers of Jesus are represented musically by phrases which recall Franz Abt and the rest of the male-voice part-song school. *Der Rosenkavalier* is so full of these vulgarities that there is no room for anything to set a higher standard to the listener. *Ariadne* is as strange a mixture as Strauss has ever produced. The incidental music to the induction might pass if Molière's play were given complete on its own merits ; it is generally agreeable and occasionally amusing in a heavy-handed sort of way. It is not particularly characteristic of Strauss, and it never for a single moment bears the least resemblance to seventeenth century music. As a musical induction to *Ariadne* it is mere waste of time.

Had Sir Herbert Tree given us the entertainment all in one language we might have had the whole of the scene which immediately precedes the opera, a scene which makes the opera a little more intelligible. It is not sufficient merely to see the horror of the composer when the order is given for the opera and the harlequinade to take place simultaneously. The offended dignity of the *prima donna* and the pert familiarity of Zerbinetta before the opera begins, go some way towards explaining their behaviours on the stage, for we are apparently meant to realise that the "opera" is merely an opera, and that the persons taking part in it are really live actors and actresses.

It is this want of sincerity, combined with the want of scholarship that constitutes the great blemish of the work. It is the more

Ariadne in Naxos

painfully noticeable, because the concluding scene of the arrival of Bacchus and his duet with Ariadne are apparently quite sincere and undoubtedly beautiful. It is here if anywhere that Strauss has developed something of a new style, and a style that is free both of commonplace and of obscurity. In the earlier part of the serious opera, where Ariadne is surrounded by the Naiad, the Dryad, and Echo, there are some beautiful effects, but they are studies in the technique of vocal writing rather than the inevitable expression of genuine emotion, either literary or musical. As for Zerbinetta and her crew, they are tedious in the extreme. The composer who could write a symphonic movement on *Funiculi funiculà* in the belief that it was a genuine folksong could hardly be expected to differentiate musically the individualities of Arlecchino, Brighella and the rest. The ensembles of male voices suggest nothing but a German *Liedertafel*. The mere difficulty of Zerbinetta's great aria has made a sensation among those who live on "sensations," but what does it amount to? It is preceded by a recitative of real power and individuality; a slow aria follows which oscillates between sentimental melody of Strauss' usual type when aiming at simplicity, and commonplace scales or cadenzas. After this comes the great rondo, intended apparently as a parody of Bellini, since the first phrase has a faint resemblance to *Ah mon giunge*. But Bellini, when he set out to write a tune could at any rate keep it going; Strauss sheers off into a different style after two bars. The exaggerated *coloratura* which forms the greater part of the rondo is rarely expressive and seldom even effective. When it is not made up of obviously instrumental phrases, it is a mere string of threadbare tags from Meyerbeer. Of the real dramatic value of *coloratura* either in comedy or tragedy Strauss appears to know nothing whatever. And he is reputed to be a great Mozart scholar!

Yet we need not be without hope. One cannot hear *Ariadne in Naxos* without perceiving that Strauss is at last beginning to realise, however dimly, the expressive powers of the voice. It is a new

The Blue Review

medium to him, as it must be to any modern German composer, and he will take some time before he can express himself fully in it. He is half ashamed of it at present, and afraid that the critic will laugh at him ; that is why he hopes to get the laugh of them by throwing all the blame on the shoulders of poor M. Jourdain. It is not, however, in Zerbinetta's aria that the conversion is apparent, not in the variations on the Rhine-maidens' songs, nor in the hymn-tune trio sung towards the end by the three nymphs, but in the scene of Bacchus and Ariadne that Strauss has at last allowed his voices to be the means by which he expresses his real musical thought. It is this duet that may perhaps make *Ariadne* a work of real importance in the history of modern German music.

EPILOGUE III. BAINS TURCS By KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"**T**HIRD storey—to the left, Madame," said the cashier, handing me a pink ticket. "One moment—I will ring for the elevator." Her black satin skirt swished across the scarlet and gold hall, and she stood among the artificial palms, her white neck and powdered face topped with masses of gleaming orange hair—like an over-ripe fungus bursting from a thick, black stem. She rang and rang. "A thousand pardons, Madame. It is disgraceful. A new attendant. He leaves this week." With her fingers on the bell she peered into the cage as though she expected to see him, lying on the floor, like a dead bird. "It is disgraceful!" There appeared from nowhere a tiny figure disguised in a peaked cap and dirty white cotton gloves. "Here you are!" she scolded. "Where have you been? What have you been doing?" For answer the figure hid its face behind one of the white cotton gloves and sneezed twice. "Ugh! Disgusting! Take Madame to the third storey!" The midget stepped aside, bowed, entered after me and clashed the gates to. We ascended, very slowly, to an accompaniment of sneezes and prolonged, half whistling sniffs. I asked the top of the patent leather cap: "Have you a cold?" "It is the air, Madame," replied the creature, speaking through its nose with a restrained air of great relish, "one is never dry here. Third floor—if you please," sneezing over my ten-centime tip.

I walked along a tiled corridor decorated with advertisements for lingerie and bust improvers—was allotted a tiny cabin and a blue print chemise and told to undress and find the Warm Room as soon as possible. Through the matchboard walls and from the corridor sounded cries and laughter and snatches of conversation. "Are you ready?" "Are you coming out now?" "Wait till you see me!" "Berthe—Berthe!" "One moment! One moment! Immediately!" I undressed quickly and carelessly, feeling like one of a troupe of little schoolgirls let loose in a swimming bath.

The Warm Room was not large. It had terra cotta painted walls with a fringe of peacocks, and a glass roof, through which one

The Blue Review

could see the sky, pale and unreal as a photographer's background screen. Some round tables strewn with shabby fashion journals, a marble basin in the centre of the room, filled with yellow lilies, and on the long, towel enveloped chairs, a number of ladies, apparently languid as the flowers. . . . I lay back with a cloth over my head, and the air, smelling of jungles and circuses and damp washing made me begin to dream. . . . Yes, it might have been very fascinating to have married an explorer . . . and lived in a jungle, as long as he didn't shoot anything or take anything captive. I detest performing beasts. Oh . . . those circuses at home . . . the tent in the paddock and the children swarming over the fence to stare at the waggons and at the clown making up with his glass stuck on the waggon wheel—and the steam organ playing the *Honeysuckle and the Bee* much too fast . . . over and over. . . . I know what this air reminds me of—a game of follow my leader among the clothes hung out to dry. . . .

The door opened. Two tall blonde women in red and white check gowns came in and took the chairs opposite mine. One of them carried a box of mandarins wrapped in silver paper and the other a manicure set. They were very stout, with gay, bold faces, and quantities of exquisite whipped fair hair.

Before sitting down they glanced round the room, looked the other women up and down, turned to each other, grimaced, whispered something, and one of them said, offering the box, "Have a mandarin?" At that they started laughing—they lay back and shook, and each time they caught sight of each other broke out afresh. "Ah, that was too good," cried one, wiping her eyes very carefully, just at the corners. "You and I, coming in here, quite serious, you know, very correct—and looking round the room—and—and as a result of our *careful* inspection—I offer you a mandarin. No, it's too funny. I must remember that. It's good enough for a music hall. Have a mandarin?" "But I cannot imagine," said the other, "why women look so hideous in Turkish baths—like beef steaks in chemises. Is it the women—or is it the air?"

Epilogue III : Bains Turcs

Look at that one, for instance—the skinny one, reading a book and sweating at the moustache—and those two over in the corner, discussing whether or not they ought to tell their non-existent babies how babies come—and . . . Heavens ! Look at this one coming in. Take the box, dear. Have all the mandarins.”

The newcomer was a short stout little woman with flat, white feet and a black mackintosh cap over her hair. She walked up and down the room, swinging her arms, in affected unconcern, glanced contemptuously at the laughing women and rang the bell for the attendant. It was answered immediately by “ Berthe,” half naked and sprinkled with soapsuds. “ Well, what is it, Madame. I’ve no time . . . ” “ Please bring me a hand towel,” said the Mackintosh Cap, in German. “ Pardon ? I do not understand. Do you speak French ? ” “ Non,” said the mackintosh cap. “ Ber—the ! ” shrieked one of the blonde women, “ have a mandarin. Oh, mon Dieu, I shall die of laughing.” The Mackintosh Cap went through a pantomime of finding herself wet and rubbing herself dry. “ *Verstehen Sie.* ” “ Mais non, Madame,” said Berthe, watching with round eyes that snapped with laughter, and she left the Mackintosh Cap, winked at the blonde women, came over, felt them as though they had been a pair of prize poultry, said “ You are doing very well,” and disappeared again. The Mackintosh Cap sat down on the edge of a chair, snatched a fashion journal, smacked over the crackling pages and pretended to read and the blonde women leaned back eating the mandarins and throwing the peelings into the lily basin. A scent of fruit, fresh and penetrating, hung on the air. I looked round at the other women. Yes, they were hideous, lying back, red and moist, with dull eyes and lank hair, the only little energy they had vented in shocked prudery at the behaviour of the two blondes. Suddenly I discovered Mackintosh Cap staring at me over the top of her fashion journal, so intently that I took flight and went into the hot room. But in vain ! Mackintosh Cap followed after and planted herself in front of me.

“ I know,” she said, confident and confiding, “ that you can

The Blue Review

“speak German. I saw it in your face just now. Wasn't that a scandal about the attendant refusing me a towel? I shall speak to the management about that and I shall get my husband to write them a letter this evening. Things always come better from a man, don't they? No,” she said, rubbing her yellowish arms, “I've never been in such a scandalous place—and four francs fifty to pay! Naturally, I shall not give a tip. You wouldn't, would you? Not after that scandal about a hand towel. . . . I've a great mind to complain about those women as well. Those two that keep on laughing and eating. Do you know who they are?” She shook her head. “They're not respectable women—you can tell at a glance. At least I can, any married woman can. They're nothing but a couple of street women. I've never been so insulted in my life. Laughing at me, mind you! The great big fat pigs like that! And I haven't sweated at all properly, just because of them. I got so angry that the sweat turned in instead of out; it does in excitement, you know, sometimes, and now instead of losing my cold, I wouldn't be surprised if I brought on a fever.”

I walked round the hot room in misery pursued by the Mackintosh Cap until the two blonde women came in, and seeing her, burst into another fit of laughter. To my rage and disgust Mackintosh Cap sidled up to me, smiled meaningly, and drew down her mouth. “I don't care,” she said, in her hideous German voice. “I shouldn't lower myself by paying any attention to a couple of street women. If my husband knew he'd never get over it. Dreadfully particular he is. We've been married six years. We come from Salzburg. It's a nice town. Four children I have living, and it was really to get over the shock of the fifth that we came here. The fifth,” she whispered, padding after me, “was born, a fine healthy child, and it never breathed! Well, after nine months, a woman can't help being disappointed, can she?”

I moved towards the vapour room. “Are you going in there,” she said. “I wouldn't if I were you. Those two have gone in. They may think you want to strike up an acquaintance with them.

Epilogue III : Bains Turcs

You never know, women like that." At that moment they came out, wrapping themselves in the rough gowns, and passing Mackintosh Cap like disdainful queens. "Are you going to take your chemise off in the vapour room?" asked she. "Don't mind me, you know. Woman is woman, and besides, if you'd rather, I won't look at you. I know—I used to be like that. I wouldn't mind betting," she went on savagely, "those filthy women had a good look at each other. Pooh! women like that. You can't shock them. And don't they look dreadful. Bold and all that false hair. That manicure box one of them had was fitted up with gold. Well, I don't suppose it was real, but I think it was disgusting to bring it. One might at least cut one's nails in private, don't you think? I *cannot* see," she said, "what men see in such women. No, a husband and children and a home to look after, that's what a woman needs. That's what my husband says. Fancy one of these hussies peeling potatoes or choosing the meat! Are you going already?"

I flew to find Berthe and all the time I was soaped and smacked and sprayed and thrown in a cold water tank I could not get out of my mind the ugly, wretched figure of the little German with a good husband and four children railing against the two fresh beauties who had never peeled potatoes nor chosen the right meat. In the anteroom I saw them once again. They were dressed in blue. One was pinning on a bunch of violets, the other buttoning a pair of ivory suede gloves. In their charming feathered hats and furs they stood talking. "Yes, there they are," said a voice at my elbow. And Mackintosh Cap, transformed, in a blue and white check blouse and crochet collar, with the little waist and large hips of the German woman and a terrible bird nest, which Salzburg doubtless called *Reise Hut* on her head. "How do you suppose they can afford clothes like that? The horrible, low creatures. No, they're enough to make a young girl think twice." And as the two walked out of the anteroom, Mackintosh Cap stared after them, her sallow face all mouth and eyes, like the face of a hungry child before a forbidden table. 185

CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

THE THEATRE

By GILBERT CANNAN

Masefield and Marie Lloyd.

IT is tolerably certain that Marie Lloyd has never read a word of Masefield, nor could her art gain anything from the study of his. Mr. Masefield, on the other hand, could gain considerably in the technique of the theatre by a critical examination of the greatest of comedienne's rendering, as Mother Eve, of the couplets :

“ When once I ate an apple the whole universe was stirred,
Now girls can eat bananas and no one says a word.”

The suggestion is not, of course, that such words should be put into the mouth of Nan or that Nan should be turned into a figure in any way resembling Marie Lloyd, though, for the purposes of burlesque, that would be an excellent expedient. The reason for this apparently grotesque juxtaposition of names is that I left the performance of *Nan* with a certain amount of dissatisfaction and found, or thought I found, the explanation of it when I listened to Marie Lloyd a few nights later. Years ago, when I attended the first performance of *Nan* at the Royalty Theatre—the play having been rejected even by the Stage Society, God bless it—I had this same feeling of dissatisfaction, though perhaps in a greater degree, and I suffered from it more because I was unpractised in the analysis of stage effects and miscalculations. I felt the beauty of the play, its curious athletic leaps into beauty, but I also felt that this beauty was withheld from me, not artfully, so as to lead me on to higher and purer realms, but inadvertently. Then the play was not particularly well acted, and its dramatic quality was ruthlessly sacrificed to the Gaffer, whose description of the tide boring up the Severn was treated as the highest point of the tragedy, rather like building a house for the sake of an ornament over the drawing-room window. At the Court Theatre, the other day, the play was in much better focus and the part of Nan was

The Theatre

superbly played by Miss Irene Rooke, with a beauty of tone and gesture and a skill in skating over the sentimental passages that I cannot remember to have seen equalled. The rendering of the noblest scene in the play, the love-passage between Nan and Dick Gurvil is surely the finest, almost the only real achievement in the modern English theatre (leaving Ireland out of account), and the names of Mr. Milton Rosmer and Miss Irene Rooke should mark a stage in the revival of English acting, as that of Mr. Masefield marks a stage in the renaissance of poetry and the drama. I would like to leave it at that, but I must work back to Marie Lloyd and my thesis, which has grown out of the feeling of disgust that followed on the moment of delight occasioned by that scene and its rendering. The love scene in *Nan* is followed by one of the worst scenes in modern drama, that between Dick and Mrs. Pargetter. It is incompetent and throws the audience back into listlessness and bewilderment. It comes, I fancy, from distrust of the emotional and imaginative force of the play and inability to shake off the old superstition that a play's technical machinery is something entirely separate from its contents. That is only true when a play has no contents and is born of no imaginative necessity. *Nan* is a strange play in that it is streaked with imagination rather than informed with it. It seems definitely to belong to a transitional period and to be half art, half old conventions. However, if it is not completely beautiful in itself, it is the occasion of much beautiful and really moving acting. Actors, of course, ask no more of dramatists than that. Audiences ask a great deal more, and they get it in the music-halls at the hands of the best and, be it noted, the most successful performers. Marie Lloyd's work for instance, is simply astonishing in its finish and subtlety and ease. Her material is often very poor, but she never utters a word nor makes a gesture that does not contribute in the minds of her audience to the general impression of wit. It is not enough for her, she knows, simply to be Marie Lloyd, but she must be from moment to moment Marie Lloyd in the terms of her audience's general

The Blue Review

anticipation of pleasure. A reputation helps, of course. Jack Point has only to say "Pass the mustard" to be greeted with roars of laughter, but he has to say it in Jack Point's way, with no technical fumbling. A first-rate artist will recognise that his reputation is other people's affair and not his own, and will not regard it as a part of his equipment. A second-rate artist will and nearly always does regard his reputation as a fetish, and devotes all his energies to feeding it, sacrificing everything, even his art, even his audience to it. Marie Lloyd is a first-rate artist. She has real wit and spontaneity and is therefore a touchstone for other works of art, even in a different kind, even for tragedy and poetry. I commend her work to the study of Mr. Masfield. It does throw light on dramatic work of all kinds, even on the works of William Shakespeare, who would have loved her and added her to his splendid collection of funny females. She would have called him "Bill" and he would have liked it. I should love to see her call Mr. Masfield "Jack," and to see him enjoy it.

I

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL in his novel "The Inside of the Cup" has given his many readers precisely what his many readers desire.

Mr. Churchill has, for a number of years, now been heavily lumbering along in his slow-moving, solid and practical conveyance and we have greeted his very solidity as a relief. He has given us, once in every two years, a hard chunk of American social history, introducing us to men and women whose boots and overcoats are admirably convincing; with heavy, solemn tread, no smile upon his face, his gaze a little anxious, his chin confidently raised, Mr. Churchill has solemnly displayed his histories. . . .

I had shared for a number of years in that comfortable arm-chair reality that had pleased so many of my acquaintances. There was, for one thing, no danger, no startling imagination, no ironic phrase, no beauty suddenly revealed could jump the nerves—only, always, I knew that that sedate and companionable voice would murmur on for my slothful entertainment.

Now, suddenly, with "The Inside of the Cup" the desire for that security has vanished. I am bored, indifferent, impatient. Perhaps in this account of American religious disturbances, Mr. Churchill is heavier, more solid, than ever before; perhaps the need for another "Robert Elsmere" has passed; perhaps sentences like "Hodder's eyes were arrested by a crowd, barring the sidewalk on the block ahead" or vivid description like "Behind the house, in the sunlight, were massed spruces of a brilliant arsenic green with purple cones" had an unsympathetic effect; perhaps the frontispiece that shows us Mr. Hodder's anguish as he is asked by a lady friend, "Can't you *feel* that you are an individual, a personality, a force that might be put to great uses," told me that Mr. Hodder's history would be unsatisfactory.

It is enough that Mr. Churchill has allowed his interest in

The Blue Review

questions of modern theology to overwhelm both his sense of humour and his knowledge of human nature. His book is dull, lifeless, void.

Nevertheless there is this interesting fact about it that its solid security is precisely what a very great number of people desire. Mr. Churchill is, in his books, so safe, so sure, so certainly to be relied upon that there can never be any kind of question as to his success. If he wants to tell us about a sidewalk or an arsenic green house he tells us without a tremor, without exaggeration, or extravagance. If he wants to tell us about the troubles in a clergyman's soul or the unhappiness of a lady of pleasure he tells us quite simply with words exactly suited to his vision. This placid perfection, this assured definition is as near to art as the Eiffel Tower is to Chartres Cathedral, but it is always visible, always tangible, always assured of its importance. What would happen to Mr. Churchill did he have a sudden revelation, were he to behold pigs flying or the statue of Liberty floating happily down New York harbour it is terrible to consider.

Meanwhile he is magnificently safe . . .

II

With what an anxious eye would he gaze upon Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith or Mr. D. H. Lawrence, were he informed of their perilous existences. Such works as "Isle of Thorns" or "Sons and Lovers" must seem to him the maddest and most irresponsible adventures. He would, in fact, be quite justified in considering that the Raphael of Miss Kaye-Smith or the Paul Morel of Mr. Lawrence were dim and uncertain figures beside his own Mr. Hodder. Mr. Hodder's clerical hat is as certain as the days of the week; Raphael and Paul are dimly and most strangely clothed . . .

The dividing-line is here. Mr. Churchill has his public, his message, his sure reward. Miss Kaye-Smith and Mr. Lawrence have, in comparison, a small public, no message, and a reward

The Novels

that is their own private affair. Meanwhile they are engaged upon most thrilling adventures.

"Isle of Thorns" is the fourth of Miss Kaye-Smith's novels and is worthy to stand with its predecessors. Perhaps "Starbrace" is still the most satisfying of these volumes, and I am not sure that "The Tramping Methodist" did not, five years ago, carry one as far along the road as "Isle of Thorns" does now, but to anyone who does not know the earlier novels "Isle of Thorns" must come as a fine shining experience, a work that, with some faults and a number of uncertainties, arrives very nearly as a great romance of the first class.

It is, I believe, the very uncertainty of Miss Kaye-Smith's touch that is the most hopeful element in her work. Amongst the younger novelists she stands alone for the inspiration of her vision. That inspiration sometimes fails her, but she is less dependant than any of her contemporaries, on her own past experiences. She creates simply by the fine energy of her imagination; at times, as now in the character of Sally, that imagination refuses conviction. Sally is real at moments only, and her relations with Baird and Raphael are clouded by the failure of her own spontaneous movements. In evolving her, Miss Kaye-Smith has been forced to work her imagination instead of allowing that imagination to do as it will. Sally is only half imagined. But Raphael—his tramp, his son, his charming priggishness—is a triumph of character: Miss Kaye-Smith has found him without being told that she ought to find him. The adventure came to her.

The Fair, the Sussex country, the hedges and skies and fields, lights and darkness, these things colour, without false sentiment or purple effects, her pages. She is, in all things, a true artist.

III

Mr. Lawrence is also an artist and "Sons and Lovers," in the first part of it at any rate, demands our most serious admiration. The pages that have to do with the early Morel history, with Mrs.

The Blue Review

Morel, Mr. Morel (a magnificent sketch), young Paul, William and the others, are finer than anything that the younger novelists have given us since James Douglas' "House with the Green Shutters."

I am reminded of that earlier work by Mr. Lawrence's combination of hard realism and passionate colour. There is much here that bites hard into the page and seems to stain it deep with its fine pungent reality. Little things Mr. Lawrence can array in fine procession. "The meadows seemed one space of ripe, evening light, whispering with the distant mill-race. She sat on a seat under the alders in the cricket ground, and fronted the evening. Before her, level and solid, spread the big green cricket-field, like the bed of a sea of light. Children played in the bluish shadow of the pavilion. Many rooks, high up, came cawing home across the softly woven sky. They stooped in a long curve down into the golden glow, concentrating, cawing, wheeling, like black flakes on a slow vortex, over a tree-clump that made a dark boss among the pasture."

I have quoted that at length because this passionate beauty is on every page and close against it passionate ugliness, grit, grime, vice, disorder, unhappiness . . . Behind it all there is this zest. This is the new thing that Mr. Lawrence is bringing to the English novel, a flaming excitement about everything in the world. "Leaves of Grass" rise to one's mind as this fine catalogue is proclaimed; it seems to me now that Walt Whitman's poetry is the only proper parallel to Mr. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers."

But it is precisely because I feel that parallel that I am not sure whether Mr. Lawrence is yet a novelist. The supreme duty and purpose of the novelist as distinguished from the poet and the essayist is the creation of character, and it is here that Mr. Lawrence fails.

Very fine is the inception of Mrs. Morel, but as the book progresses and Paul is caught into his amorous adventures, Mrs. Morel slips away. Surely it had been Mr. Lawrence's purpose to discover his book's motive in the struggle between the mother and the

The Novels

lover for Paul. That struggle, eagerly anticipated by the reader, is lost in Mr. Lawrence's discoveries. Here is a scene, here an experience, here a colour or a scent . . . always these things, the thrilling jumble and collision of life, catch Mr. Lawrence's attention. Paul, himself, is never bound finally together. We are shown him here and there, are told of his impulses, his desires, but the ultimate picture that we should have of him is never given to us.

Finally there are in this book too many physical experiences. It is not that such things are of small importance, but it is rather that the repetition of them overbalances the book's proportions. It is this excess that is Mr. Lawrence's chief danger.

Here, however, in "Isle of Thorns" and "Sons and Lovers" are two books, courageous, honest, adventurous. Introduce Mr. Hodder and his theology to Raphael and Paul Morel and how good for him these new friends would be !

Irish Plays and Playwrights : Lady Gregory's New Comedies :
The Joy of the Theatre

MR. PETT RIDGE, in a passage almost excusably underlined and over-quoted, made a stout lady exclaim, after hearing "Kathleen Mavourneen" sung : "Anything about Ireland always makes me cry : I come from Kent." That remark, over-emphasised though it is into travesty, does nevertheless show that Mr. Pett Ridge's sense of things is not so purely grotesque and derivative as some readers are in the habit of suggesting. It shows that he is not unaware of piercing general truths ; one of which is that there is prevalent in England a shocking sentimentality over the subject of Ireland. Mournful Irish songs produce free tears, however bad the songs may be. Songs such as "Come Back to Erin" are as popular with the general public as "Father O'Flynn." At the time of the Boer War one of the songs that moved drunken men most easily to tears was "What do you think of the Irish now ?"

From the easily moved drunkard to the enthusiast in other fields is not a very great step. In the theatre the case is only on a different level. Of course, lovers of sentimental songs find themselves driven away by the Irish drama (excepting by the farces of Lady Gregory, which are sufficiently clear to be acceptable by all minds) ; but there is nevertheless a danger that in our love of the beautiful tones and phrases we may be misled into thinking that whatever comes out of Ireland must be first rate. The cause of English loyalty to Ireland is the fact that the English, having lost nationality in empire, look with wonder at a nation within that empire—no longer puzzled and sullen, but proud of every part of its heritage. Where the history of England in the nineteenth century embraces a bewildering host of petty bullyings and stupidities and clumsy sad dismays and errors, the history of Ireland (read either with or without *parti pris*) is a record of splendid

General Literature

lost endeavour. Nothing so quickly touches the heart and moves swift enthusiasm as lost endeavour.

It is without avail that Mr. Shaw "exposes" the Irish, or that some of the later Irish dramatists painstakingly dwell in the shady walks of the national life. The enthusiasm has kindled: the English are on the whole more prone to excite themselves about the Irish—as a character, or as a nation, or as an art-producing colony—than they are about any other (even the most distant) section of the empire. It was to be, and is; and all we can do now is to try to discriminate between the real virtues of the Irish and those virtues which have been plastered on to the Irish by our own solemn superficiality.

In America the transplanted Irish grew angry with the greatest modern play; but there has sprung up there as here a parasitic literature, founded upon the writings of Ireland. I do not refer to such books as Mr. P. P. Howe's study of Synge, which is profoundly critical as well as enthusiastic. But I may perhaps allow myself to describe Mr. Cornelius Weygandt's book ("Irish Plays and Playwrights," Constable, 6s. 6d. net) as a curious mixture of shrewd criticism and preposterous comment, due in part to a ravenous desire for completeness and in part to an inability to find the exact criticism for each item under survey. Mr. Weygandt is obsessed by what he insists upon calling "The Celtic Renaissance," and the index to his book shows a perfectly amazing industry in the reading and correlation of poets, playwrights, and novelists. But although a sixth of the whole work is taken up with a huge estimate of the works of William Sharp, and although Ibsen and Maeterlinck are freely referred to, one may go the whole length of the book and fail to find mention of the fact that Goldsmith and Mangan were Irishmen, while such modern writers as James Stephens, Winifred Letts, and Lord Dunsany are either practically or wholly ignored. I should not personally have included Goldsmith as a participant in the Celtic Renaissance; but Mr. Weygandt is at pains to show that George Moore is the only great

The Blue Review

Irish novelist because Miss Edgeworth is not the equal of Miss Austen. Apart from the fact that the sex of a writer is not the only thing to be considered in comparative criticism, it may also be said that Miss Edgeworth was a very good novelist indeed, and that in any case the introduction of her name (and the names of many other persons of like irrelevance) has not a great deal to do with the Irish literary movement. The truth is that Mr. Weygandt has not kept to the title of his book because he wanted to rope in all he knew about Irish literature. That has been his undoing. Instead of taking the spirit of each writer and illustrating his criticism by examples chosen for the purpose, he seems to take every work in turn and to attempt some apt criticism upon it. The supply of *aperçus* proves on the whole to be very unequal to the demand, and Mr. Weygandt goes bothering round a point until he is really smothered by his own unhappy method. Thus, in the essay on Synge, we get this comical hotch-potch, which goes gravely from one irrelevant comparison to another—"Borrow, who comes to mind more often than any other writer as one reads Synge, chose to avoid love scenes, and Borrow's follower, Mr. Hewlett, for all his gusto, has no such exaltation as this. Had Harry Richmond taken to the road with Kiomi we might have known something like it. A chapter out of the early life of Juggling Jerry and his 'Old Girl,' done in the manner of 'Love in the Valley,' would be still nearer to it. . . . I doubt if Synge had read Meredith, and even had he, the life of the roads and their cottages that Synge knew so well was his master, and no writer at all." So that all these suppositions bring us to an admission of their futility. Mr. Weygandt is not often as bad as this; but his book would have been better if it had aimed at being simply a critical study of its subject, and not a meandering stream of often perfunctory commentary.

I said that Lady Gregory had the power to please English sentimentalists who were affronted by Synge. By this I did not mean that Lady Gregory was sentimental. Her work has a quite

General Literature

admirable freedom from sentimentality, and her notes to a new volume ("New Plays," Putnam, 5s. net) are full of sage remarks. The plays themselves are similar to those which we have previously seen, and perhaps the best of them is "Damer's Gold," a two-act comedy. One, "Coats," is in Lady Gregory's less happy style, an antic squabble which resembles in its chattering style such a play as "The Workhouse Ward." These plays produce much laughter in the theatre; but they are not really amusing. Lady Gregory says that she began to write comedies because they were needed for the Abbey Theatre; and even such plays as "Hyacinth Halvey" and (in the new volume) "The Full Moon" have a thin body of funning rather than a genuine humorous impulse. For the reason that it is based upon a moral idea, and that verbal eccentricity is less sought after in the speeches, I think "Damer's Field" is the best play in the new volume. It has some character, and is strictly worked out. That cannot be said of "The Bogie Man," with its flail-like speeches; although the idea is genuinely comic. But Lady Gregory is really a serious dramatist, and not a writer of farcical dialogues; and it is when she is furthest away from caricature that her work is most characteristic.

Mr. Gilbert Cannan has contributed to Mr. Batsford's charming new series of "Fellowship Books" (2s. net per volume) a very refreshing essay on "The Joy of the Theatre." Mr. Cannan is intensely hopeful, looking to the future for the realisation of his dreams; and it is delightful to find him so generous in acknowledging good work, however far it may be in its aims from his own ideal. Mr. Cannan's book is practically an appeal on behalf of the artist. He wants the artist to take joy in the making of beautiful things for their own sake. Only so can art be truly a creative force. This, naturally, is difficult at the present time, when we are but slightly emergent from a reaction against insincerity; but Mr. Cannan has a clear perception of encouraging signs. When he so obviously looks to the younger generation for further advances along the splendid road to a new artistic era, the younger generation

The Blue Review

cannot but accept the challenge—not because it is Mr. Cannan who demands support, but because Mr. Cannan's is the immediate voice that speaks. But it is impossible to avoid finding some peculiar fascination in ugliness for its own sake : if it is the sense of beauty that makes the artist self-expressive, it is the sense of ugliness that tempers his rapture, and gives it the quality of fine steel. Synge is full of the sense of ugliness no less than the sense of beauty ; and if these things are in his work lightened by the most wonderful power of imagining and transmitting the fine quality of joy, we must not omit to record their presence. Some of the other Irish dramatists have no joy ; they are guilty of tame acquiescence in a movement, a serious dependance upon the acting of the Abbey company for an effect of reality. This is not as it should be. They have actors whose powers seem equal to all demands ; they have a loyal audience of their countrymen abroad, and the beastly patronage of the polite class, plus the sentiment of the Celtomaniac. Yet even Mr. Weygandt, although he seems to have hunted through the work of the minor Irish dramatists with characteristic vigilance and mildly-exerted enthusiasm, is forced to hesitate. It is one of the worst points of his book that he goes through everything and leaves the reader without any conclusions ; but it does appear more or less distinctly that only one or two of the young men are doing work to warrant inclusion in a " Celtic Renaissance." On the evidence, the Renaissance has outgrown its strength, by being over-cultivated. What Mr. Cannan wants, and what we all want, is an art that bites through the surface of life as a beginning—something with vitality, no matter how that vitality may be directed. In the modern Irish drama there is little vitality, and it is still so much the fashion to cry at anything Irish (or to laugh) that it will be some time before we realise that what edifies us in the performances of modern Irish plays is the presentation, not the fine heart of joy which we think is there. Synge had the joy Mr. Cannan wants, and his splendid preface to " The Tinker's Wedding " is quoted appropriately

General Literature

in Mr. Cannan's book. But where else in all this boasted Celtic Renaissance has joy any place? Mr. Yeats is a great poet; Mr. James Stephens has a daring and amazing personality; but beyond these names the Irish literary movement is often enough a sad and spiritless affair. We have got in England (though we make no boast of it, and have no books written about it) a dramatic movement of equal strength. We have men who are really striking out new paths, and trying to go beyond their sincere predecessors both in sincerity and in creative power. Only the appalling sentimentality and false judgment which the Irish habitually arouse in England is responsible for the great over-praising of the Irish literary movement. We shall have many more fat books about the Celtic Renaissance; and apart from Synge as a dramatist and Mr. Yeats as a poet there will always be the need to fill the book with essays on William Sharp or some other persons who have nothing to do with the case. The sooner Mr. Cannan's joy is triumphantly found in the English theatre, the sooner we shall—dramatically speaking—get going; and then perhaps the rise to eminence of the English school will provoke the Irish dramatists who are writing dull plays about morbidly uninteresting people into some sort of counter-Renaissance. Otherwise, we shall continue to be sentimental about the Irish (who are sometimes, but not often, sentimental about themselves) until the conceited nation will assume that the names plastered on to a loyal and enthusiastic little body of workers have been really earned. The Celtic Renaissance is really a false term, and it does harm by exalting into a titanic struggle what is really a movement among very modern, very thoughtful, and very derivative amateurs.

GERMAN BOOKS By D. H. LAWRENCE

Thomas Mann

THOMAS MANN is perhaps the most famous of German novelists now writing. He, and his elder brother, Heinrich Mann, with Jakob Wassermann, are acclaimed the three artists in fiction of present-day Germany.

But Germany is now undergoing that craving for form in fiction, that passionate desire for the mastery of the medium of narrative, that will of the writer to be greater than and undisputed lord over the stuff he writes, which is figured to the world in Gustave Flaubert.

Thomas Mann is over middle age, and has written three or four books : " Buddenbrooks," a novel of the patrician life of Lübeck ; " Tristan," a collection of six " Novellen " ; " Königliche Hoheit," an unreal Court romance ; various stories, and lastly, " Der Tod in Venedig." The author himself is the son of a Lübeck " Patrizier."

It is as an artist rather than as a story-teller that Germany worships Thomas Mann. And yet it seems to me, this craving for form is the outcome, not of artistic conscience, but of a certain attitude to life. For form is not a personal thing like style. It is impersonal like logic. And just as the school of Alexander Pope was logical in its expressions, so it seems the school of Flaubert is, as it were, logical in its æsthetic form. " Nothing outside the definite line of the book," is a maxim. But can the human mind fix absolutely the definite line of a book, any more than it can fix absolutely any definite line of action for a living being ?

Thomas Mann, however, is personal, almost painfully so, in his subject-matter. In " Tonio Kröger," the long " Nouvelle " at the end of the " Tristan " volume, he paints a detailed portrait of himself as a youth and younger man, a careful analysis. And he expresses at some length the misery of being an artist. " Literature is not a calling, it is a curse." Then he says to the Russian painter girl : " There is no artist anywhere but longs again, my love, for the common life." But any young artist might say that. It is

German Books

because the stress of life in a young man, but particularly in an artist, is very strong, and has as yet found no outlet, so that it rages inside him in "Sturm und Drang." But the condition is the same, only more tragic, in the Thomas Mann of fifty-three. He has never found any outlet for himself, save his art. He has never given himself to anything but his art. This is all well and good, if his art absorbs and satisfies him, as it has done some great men, like Corot. But then there are the other artists, the more human, like Shakespeare and Goethe, who must give themselves to life as well as to art. And if these were afraid, or despised life, then with their surplus they would ferment and become rotten. Which is what ails Thomas Mann. He is physically ailing, no doubt. But his complaint is deeper: it is of the soul.

And out of this soul-ailment, this unbelief, he makes his particular art, which he describes, in Tonio Kröger, as "Wählerisch, erlesen, kostbar, fein, reizbar gegen das Banale, und aufs höchste empfindlich in Fragen des Taktes und Geschmacks." He is a disciple, in method, of the Flaubert who wrote: "I worked sixteen hours yesterday, to-day the whole day, and have at last finished one page." In writing of the Leitmotiv and its influence, he says: "Now this method alone is sufficient to explain my slowness. It is the result neither of anxiety nor indigence, but of an overpowering sense of responsibility for the choice of every word, the coining of every phrase . . . a responsibility that longs for perfect freshness, and which, after two hours' work, prefers not to undertake an important sentence. For which sentence is important, and which not? Can one know beforehand whether a sentence, or part of a sentence may not be called upon to appear again as motif, peg, symbol, citation or connection? And a sentence which must be heard twice must be fashioned accordingly. It must—I do not speak of beauty—possess a certain high level, and symbolic suggestion, which will make it worthy to sound again in any epic future. So every point becomes a standing ground, every adjective a decision, and it is clear that such work is not to be produced off-hand."

The Blue Review

This, then, is the method. The man himself was always delicate in constitution. "The doctors said he was too weak to go to school, and must work at home." I quote from Aschenbach, in "Der Tod in Venedig." "When he fell, at the age of fifty-three, one of his closest observers said of him : "Aschenbach has always lived like this"—and he gripped his fist hard clenched ; "never like this"—and he let his open hand lie easily on the arm of the chair."

He forced himself to write, and kept himself to the work. Speaking of one of his works, he says : "It was pardonable, yea, it showed plainly the victory of his morality, that the uninitiated reader supposed the book to have come of a solid strength and one long breath ; whereas it was the result of small daily efforts and hundreds of single inspirations."

And he gives the sum of his experience in the belief—"dass beinahe alles Grosse, was dastehe, als ein Trotzdem dastehe, trotz Kummer und Qual, Armut, Verlassenheit, Körperschwäche, Laster, Leidenschaft und tausend hemmnischen Zustände gekommen sei." And then comes the final revelation, difficult to translate. He is speaking of life as it is written into his books :

"For endurance of one's fate, grace in suffering, does not only mean passivity, but is an active work, a positive triumph, and the Sebastian figure is the most beautiful symbol, if not of all art, yet of the art in question. If one looked into this portrayed world and saw the elegant self-control that hides from the eyes of the world to the last moment the inner undermining, the biological decay ; saw the yellow ugliness which, sensuously at a disadvantage, could blow its choking heat of desire to a pure flame, and even rise to sovereignty in the kingdom of beauty ; saw the pale impotence which draws out of the glowing depths of its intellect sufficient strength to subdue a whole vigorous people, bring them to the foot of the Cross, to the feet of impotence ; saw the amiable bearing in the empty and severe service of Form ; saw the quickly enervating longing and art of the born swindler : if one saw such a fate as this, and all the rest it implied, then one would be forced to

German Books

doubt whether there were in reality any other heroism than that of weakness. Which heroism, in any case, is more of our time than this? ”

Perhaps it is better to give the story of “ *Der Tod in Venedig*,” from which the above is taken, and to whose hero it applies.

Gustav von Aschenbach, a fine, famous author, over fifty years of age, coming to the end of a long walk one afternoon, sees as he is approaching a burying place, near Munich, a man standing between the chimeric figures of the gateway. This man in the gate of the cemetery is almost the motive of the story. By him, Aschenbach is infected with a desire to travel. He examines himself minutely, in a way almost painful in its frankness, and one sees the whole soul of this author of fifty-three. And it seems, the artist has absorbed the man, and yet the man is there, like an exhausted organism on which a parasite has fed itself strong. Then begins a kind of Holbein “ *Totentanz*.” The story is quite natural in appearance, and yet there is the gruesome sense of symbolism throughout. The man near the burying ground has suggested travel—but whither? Aschenbach sets off to a watering place on the Austrian coast of the Adriatic, seeking some adventure, some passionate adventure, to which his sick soul and unhealthy body have been kindled. But finding himself on the Adriatic, he knows it is not thither that his desire draws him, and he takes ship for Venice. It is all real, and yet with a curious sinister unreality, like decay, the “ *biological decay*.” On board there is a man who reminds one of the man in the gateway, though there is no connection. And then, among a crowd of young Poles who are crossing, is a ghastly fellow, whom Aschenbach sees is an old man dressed up as young, who capers unsuspected among the youths, drinks hilariously with them, and falls hideously drunk at last on the deck, reaching to the author, and slobbering about “ *dem allerliebsten, dem schönsten Liebchen*.” Suddenly the upper plate of his false teeth falls on his underlip.

Aschenbach takes a gondola to the Lido, and again the gondolier

The Blue Review

reminds one of the man in the cemetery gateway. He is, moreover, one who will make no concession, and, in spite of Aschenbach's demand to be taken back to St. Mark's, rows him in his black craft to the Lido, talking to himself softly all the while. Then he goes without payment.

The author stays in a fashionable hotel on the Lido. The adventure is coming, there by the pallid sea. As Aschenbach comes down into the hall of the hotel, he sees a beautiful Polish boy of about fourteen, with honey-coloured curls clustering round his pale face, standing with his sisters and their governess.

Aschenbach loves the boy—but almost as a symbol. In him he loves life and youth and beauty, as Hyacinth in the Greek myth. This, I suppose, is blowing the choking heat to pure flame, and raising it to the kingdom of beauty. He follows the boy, watches him all day long on the beach, fascinated by beauty concrete before him. It is still the Künstler and his abstraction : but there is also the “yellow ugliness, sensually at a disadvantage,” of the elderly man below it all. But the picture of the writer watching the folk on the beach gleams and lives with a curious, gold-phosphorescent light, touched with the brightness of Greek myth, and yet a modern sea-shore with folk on the sands, and a half-threatening, diseased sky.

Aschenbach, watching the boy in the hotel lift, finds him delicate, almost ill, and the thought that he may not live long fills the elderly writer with a sense of peace. It eases him to think the boy should die.

Then the writer suffers from the effect of the Sirocco, and intends to depart immediately from Venice. But at the station he finds with joy that his luggage has gone wrong, and he goes straight back to the hotel. There, when he sees Tadzin again, he knows why he could not leave Venice.

There is a month of hot weather, when Aschenbach follows Tadzin about, and begins to receive a look, loving, from over the lad's shoulder. It is wonderful, the heat, the unwholesomeness, the passion in Venice. One evening comes a street singer, smelling

German Books

of carbolic acid, and sings beneath the verandah of the hotel. And this time, in gruesome symbolism, it is the man from the burying ground distinctly.

The rumour is, that the black cholera is in Venice. An atmosphere of secret plague hangs over the city of canals and palaces. Aschenbach verifies the report at the English bureau, but cannot bring himself to go away from Tadzin, nor yet to warn the Polish family. The secretly pest-smitten days go by. Aschenbach follows the boy through the stinking streets of the town and loses him. And on the day of the departure of the Polish family, the famous author dies of the plague.

It is absolutely, almost intentionally, unwholesome. The man is sick, body and soul. He portrays himself as he is, with wonderful skill and art portrays his sickness. And since any genuine portrait is valuable, this book has its place. It portrays one man, one atmosphere, one sick vision. It claims to do no more. And we have to allow it. But we know it is unwholesome—it does not strike me as being morbid for all that, it is too well done—and we give it its place as such.

Thomas Mann seems to me the last sick sufferer from the complaint of Flaubert. The latter stood away from life as from a leprosy. And Thomas Mann, like Flaubert, feels vaguely that he has in him something finer than ever physical life revealed. Physical life is a disordered corruption, against which he can fight with only one weapon, his fine æsthetic sense, his feeling for beauty, for perfection, for a certain fitness which soothes him, and gives him an inner pleasure, however corrupt the stuff of life may be. There he is, after all these years, full of disgusts and loathing of himself as Flaubert was, and Germany is being voiced, or partly so, by him. And so, with real suicidal intention, like Flaubert's, he sits, a last too-sick disciple, reducing himself grain by grain to the statement of his own disgust, patiently, self-destructively, so that his statement at least may be perfect in a world of corruption. But he is so late.

The Blue Review

Already I find Thomas Mann, who, as he says, fights so hard against the banale in his work, somewhat banale. His expression may be very fine. But by now what he expresses is stale. I think we have learned our lesson, to be sufficiently aware of the fulsomeness of life. And even while he has a rhythm in style, yet his work has none of the rhythm of a living thing, the rise of a poppy, then the after uplift of the bud, the shedding of the calyx and the spreading wide of the petals, the falling of the flower and the pride of the seed-head. There is an unexpectedness in this such as does not come from their carefully plotted and arranged developments. Even "Madame Bovary" seems to me dead in respect to the living rhythm of the whole work. While it is there in "Macbeth" like life itself.

But Thomas Mann is old—and we are young. Germany does not feel very young to me.

WHY is writing, to say nothing of painting and music, dead in modern Italy? Here is an instructive incident. In a recent number of *La Voce*, there appeared a letter from a Mr. Gustavo Botta accusing a journalist, Mr. Giuseppe Vannicola, of shameless plagiarism; Mr. Vannicola was said to have signed his name to a number of articles on such subjects as Cubism and Debussy's music which were nothing but translations and compilations clumsily made from the work of well-known French writers. The eye of M. André Gide, the novelist, critic and dramatist, who happened to be passing through Florence at the moment, was caught by this letter; dipping his pen in the acid of that refined irony which has won him so many admirers all over Europe, he wrote to the editor of *La Voce* in deprecation of Mr. Botta's outburst. What, he asked, was all this fuss about? The artistic relations between France and Italy have ever been of the most cordial; the Frenchmen from whom D'Annunzio deigns to borrow only feel themselves honoured; recently a sketch of his own was adopted by Mr. F. M. Martini for the Roman stage without acknowledgment; such incidents only foster international good-feeling. No doubt, he added, the writers pillaged by Mr. Vannicola would join, if they knew of it, in protesting indignantly against Mr. Botta's attack. The letter, in short, was a model of discreet sarcasm. What followed is almost incredible. First Mr. Botta retorts with lofty morality, explaining at immense length that it is not a question of the more or less gratification of the plagiarised, since something higher, the principle of literary honesty, is at stake, and giving in parallel columns chapter and verse for Mr. Vannicola's sins. At the same time appears a friend of the accused, a Mr. Giovanni Amendola, to thank M. Gide publicly for his spirited defence of Mr. Botta's victim. Nor does the joke end here. Mr. Botta returns to the charge with a "nothing can alter the facts"; Mr. Martini writes to say that M. Gide is no gentleman and that he himself

The Blue Review

is a gentleman—didn't he, when his play was printed, give it a motto out of one of M. Gide's works? and finally Mr. Vannicola comes out with his defence, which is this: "There are plagiarisms of the spirit far more immoral than any plagiarisms of the letter. . . . I love life, and, in spite of painful adventures, life has not ceased to love me. My literary work has, for me, the importance of the flower which I put in my buttonhole."

Mr. Vannicola, with his bad taste in buttonholes, may be left to the obscurity which is his due; but *La Voce* purports to be an "advanced" organ, and the controversy, however trifling, may help us to see why Italian literature is what it is to-day. The striking fact is the denseness of all the persons concerned, their entire lack of a sense of humour. Not one of them sees that M. Gide is laughing at them; they are a pack of solemn children, egged on to absurdity by a clever, malicious grown-up. Then their fundamental insincerity, both of word and act, is obvious; they cannot play fair, and they cannot speak except in the cadences of a hollow and insipid rhetoric. And lastly, it is only too true, "there are plagiarisms of the spirit more immoral than any plagiarism of the letter." Most Italian novels and poems of the moment are plagiarisms, not wholesome and deliberate, but subtly, as by some spiritual infusion, from French sources. The countrymen of Boccaccio, from whose wide humanity, from whose sensitiveness to the ludicrous, the beautiful and the terrible all modern narrative art is descended, seem to have lost the power of contemplating life with sincerity and independence, at least as far as the reproduction of it in words is concerned.

To begin with the question of humour, it is lack of humour which weighs down Mr. Vergilio Brocchi, author of *L'Isola Sonante* and *I Sentieri della Vita* (Milan, Fratelli Treves). Such a story, for instance, as that called *La buon' anima di Agnese*, in which a widower, bereaved in the prime of his age and burdened with a pug-dog to which the excellent defunct had been devoted, believes that life must henceforth be forlorn and impracticable,

Italian Books

the entertainment consisting in the gradual dissipation of this illusion, evidently requires the airiest and gayest of touches ; but the climax, when the hero, his taste for independence recovered, begins to live again and succeeds at one stroke in getting rid of the pug and avoiding a second marriage, is reached by a process of leaden prolixity, with every point hammered out in a frenzy of emphasis. This exaggerated emphasis seems, in fact, the only native thing that these Italian writers have about them ; take away their special *bravura*, the dreadful flourish of their rich, rank, pseudo-Ciceronian manner, and nothing remains but a little kernel of second-rate Parisian product. The very language has lost all raciness of idiomatic flavour. It would be interesting to inquire into the causes of this disease. Chief among them, no doubt, would have to be noted the extraordinary effectiveness of the forms of expression devised by the French genius, which, with their finality and logical clearness, have led most of the world captive ; but a large part would also have to be assigned to the peculiar weaknesses of Italy—to her lack of any more than superficial unity, to the very richness and diversity of her dialects, and, in the last resort, to the uneasy self-consciousness which comes from a sense of political inferiority. Not only Italian fiction, but poetry too is touched with this deadly plagiarism of the spirit, of which it would be possible to discover the seeds even in the rugged Carducci, although he and his gentler successor at Bologna, Pascoli, to whom, along with Carducci, Professor Mignon devotes some well-informed pages in his *Études de Littérature Italienne* (Paris, Hachette, 3 fr. 50), seem to belong to a nobler race than the writers of to-day who, while struggling to assert their personality, remain, if they are anything, mere satellites of the coteries of Paris.

Consider Mr. Francesco Chiesa, one of whose objects is said to be the preservation of the Italian tongue in its struggle against competitors in the Canton Ticino. If this is true, his *Istorie e Favole* (A. F. Formiggini, Genoa) are a curious, even a tragic,

The Blue Review

comment on my remarks ; for here we have a writer active on one side of a struggle between nationalities, yet drawing all his inspiration from the foreigner. Mr. Chiesa's stories are a hash of Renaissance fantasies, a hodge-podge of pagan myth, of catholicism and of romance, such as has often been served up done to a turn by Anatole France and seems scarcely worth doing again. Here the French influence is palpable, and receives no disguise from a style which is often praised as sober and incisive. But allowance must be made for Italian exaggeration ; if there is sobriety, it is the sobriety of complete dulness.

The simplicity of Mr. Chiesa's case is not typical, however. The disease of spiritual plagiarism usually runs into subtler shapes, which, though they are infinite, seem in Italy to have one common characteristic, an exuberance of convulsive agitation. This agitation is like that of a man in a fever of self-distrust, who knows that there is something wrong with him and cannot quite make out what ; he casts about frantically for some attitude which will bring him salvation, but the quest is always vain, because salvation cannot come by attitudes. It is sometimes as exaggerated hatred of the past, and sometimes as exaggerated love of the past, that this self-distrust appears. The former, as embodied in the Futurists, has won notoriety abroad, and is strong in Mr. Giovanni Papini's *Un uomo finito* (Florence, Libreria della Voce) ; the latter in a very different book, Mr. Antonio Beltramelli's *Le Novelle della Guerra* (Milan, Fratelli Treves). Both spring from the same bitter root, that mood of exasperation and disillusionment which harps on the degradation of an Italy treated as an old curiosity shop, a villeggiatura for the idle rich of Europe, a street-walker among the nations, and which so strangely strikes the foreigner who admires the progress which she has made since 1870 and her great achievements in the sciences. There is indeed something strained and artificial about all the literatures of patriotic revival so fashionable just now ; not even the resources of M. Maurice Barrés' exquisite art can quite reconcile us to his glorification of the parish

Italian Books

pump. That nations are to be saved by splitting into their component parts, each part a focus of the ancestral virtues that cling to the soil, is not very plausible at the best ; and when the ideas of M. Barrés have been passed through the romantic Italian mind, and emerge exhausted of their content and unadorned by any accomplishment of style, the result is not attractive. Both Mr. Papini and Mr. Beltramelli are furiously *paesani*, the one of the grey-green Tuscan landscape, the other of the broad quiet spaces of the Romagna. Mr. Beltramelli is bellicose as well ; he is a voice of that section of feeling, at present dominant, for which the return to ancestral virtue means a policy of military conquest. Imagine Mr. Kipling's imperial enthusiasm and ferocity against black men multiplied tenfold, with all the admirable realism left out and the Latin ideal of glory substituted for the English ideal of the strong silent public-school boy, and you have some idea of Mr. Beltramelli's sketches of the Tripolitan campaign, which he hails as the beginning, after an era of lethargy, of a new *risorgimento*. It is symptomatic that even the introduction to a new edition of the collection of Dalmatian popular ballads which Niccolo Tommaseo published in 1841 (*Canti Illirici*, Milan, Libreria editrice Milanese, 1912) cannot refrain from dragging in the Libyan war as the resumption by Italy of "her interrupted renovation."

The fact is, megalomania is a stock result of neurotic self-consciousness. In the struggle to assert his personality the patient jealously watches the actions of others in order to outdo them, and he has his eye on others even in his abysses of despair. Thus at every point on the scale he is incurably imitative ; he is unable, as the phrase is, to "be himself." Mr. Papini's *Un uomo finito* is a complete anatomy of this morbid state, and therefore, though devoid of artistic merit, is a fascinating book. In language which is meant to be vigorous, but is merely turgid, he gives us, in the first person, the self-revelation of a man who is played out. The hero begins by hating society ; he ransacks all departments of philosophy, scholarship and culture, he burns with literary

The Blue Review

ambition, he founds a review ; then, ever unsatisfied, he dreams of omnipotence ; he will impose his will on the world, he will be God. Failing in this enterprise, he sinks into decay ; but in the end he revives and declares that he still has unpleasant surprises in store for his enemies. " I still have something to say, and time before me ; in my house there is always white paper in abundance." May he live to cover many reams of this paper without misgivings ! His book is a compendium of all the qualities characteristic of Italian literature to-day—absence of sense of humour, insincerity, inability to observe life at first-hand, tasteless extravagance, and that submission to the influence of foreign culture which is none the less abject because combined with an angry desire to shake off the yoke. " Is it not possible," he cries at one moment in the false frankness of his confessions, " a thousand times possible that I am nothing but a frigid reader of books, always being warmed up at the fire of others, that I have mistaken the submissive grumbling of an ambitious soul for the bubbling of a vein that is quick to overflow and to gush, to refresh the thirsty earth and to mirror the sky ? " It is more than possible ; it is certain.

Gino Severini

GINO SEVERINI paints what he feels, what he chooses to feel, what he is naturally disposed to feel, if you will, with an amazing virtuosity. The studies in movement shown at the Marlborough Gallery in Duke Street for two or three weeks in April and May were full of technical resource, of lively draughtsmanship, of an almost baffling inventiveness. Relatively simple drawings of dancers, highly complex works in which colour, line and tone span heterodoxically into whirling compositions—with scarcely an exception they were effective as a pistol shot. What is even more, they were pleasantly effective. The line was strong and sweeping, instinct with movement: the colour, where colour was used, made cunning play with its whites and lemons and bright greens against a heavier puce.

I write so far without reference to Severini's æsthetic, without any thought of his theories or the ultimate value of his work; without any valuing of "dynamism" as an emotional stimulant. Rather pathetically, Severini himself said a good deal about his theories and beliefs in an introduction to the catalogue, and in notes about the pictures. I am not going to argue with him. I have a natural respect for terms, and the painter in his headlong innocence is a disarming opponent.

Indeed, I am concerned far less with his theories, whether technical or æsthetic, than with the quality of his perceptions. His theories, as I understand them, I grant him with enthusiasm. A working theory is always chock-full of interest, in painting just as much as in bootmaking. I don't mind at all being "placed in the centre of the picture" (Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting). It is quite a reasonable thing for a painter to try to do; it is not by any means merely a frivolous thing to say that the middle of a picture is as proper a place as any for the critic. Every one who has tried to express movement statically, and nearly all painters and sculptors have tried consciously to do that, has been

The Blue Review

set theory-making in the attempt. It would be as foolish to blame Severini for theorising as it would be to blame Michaelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci or Dürer or Cézanne. It is impossible to do any sort of work without theory.

But the quality of his perceptions—that is a different thing altogether. The perceptions of a painter are his power of giving ; that is to say of creation. There are obviously degrees of perception, which we call higher or lower according to our personal predilections. And here, because we are really at grips, and because he is making a statement of faith, I must quote from Severini's introduction. After speaking of " the intensity and rapidity with which life is lived to-day," he says :

" We choose to concentrate our attention on things in motion because our modern sensibility is particularly qualified to grasp the idea of speed. Heavy, powerful motor-cars rushing through the crowded streets of our great cities, dancers reflected in the fairy ambience of light and colour, aeroplanes flying above the heads of an excited throng. . . . These sources of emotion satisfy our sense of the lyric and dramatic universe, better than do two pears and an apple."

Now this attitude towards life may imply strength or violence ; it is a matter of opinion. To my mind Severini's perceptions are hectic rather than profound and imaginative. It is not a question of realism. All art, in so far as it is the expression of personal emotion, of personal vision, is realistic. To the dreamer dreams are reality. But to be impressed by a realisation of the complexities of modern life is an admission of weakness, a negation of personality. To be driven by such a realisation to worship of the outward signs of these complexities is the last sign of abject self-surrender, of Juggernaut belief. For surely the real force behind Severini's delight in the movement of omnibuses and can-can dancers, behind all his dexterity in expressing the " dynamism " of swirling fêtes and tube railways, is not joy, but fear. And fear, it seems to me, is a bad master of the arts.

Beethoven, Elgar, Debussy

MUSIC during May and June means a sea of recitals at the rate of about forty or fifty a week. No single individual could hope to cope with them even if he wished to. As a matter of fact they are all much of a muchness. The same things are done over and over again, particularly by the pianists. I am left wondering whether Beethoven wrote anything besides the Waldstein Sonata or Brahms anything except the Sonata in F minor. Occasionally a singer like Elena Gerhardt or Julia Hostater appears, and makes you feel that recitals are sometimes justified ; or a pianist like Petri or Pachmann. But the general run of concerts, as I have said, is monotonous at this time of year.

The London Symphony Orchestra has given three concerts of varying interest, the best of them being the first. Mengelberg conducted a very vital performance of Beethoven's C Minor Symphony and made a great impression with "Also sprach Zarathustra." It is one of Strauss' directest and most musical works, and was played with a refreshing enthusiasm. When Strauss is forced to think in music he really can achieve something : it is when he tries to be funny ("Till Eulenspiegel" excepted) or satirical that he fails. The second concert showed Mengelberg as a tyrant rather than a conductor. Perhaps he was angry at having to play Mr. Haydn Wood's unfortunate concerto—which most of the critics seemed to judge by unnecessarily advanced standards. The composer knows his business, but he should not have allowed so early a work to be produced at a time like the present. It was probably good enough and clever enough when it was written, but he could surely do something better now. At least I hope for his own sake that he can ; for though sincerely and averagely well constructed, the concerto was both sentimental and verbose.

At the last concert Nikisch conducted the Choral Symphony with the Leeds Chorus. Comparison is immediately suggested

The Blue Review

with two other recent performances. The first, under Safonov, was perfectly straightforward and simple, without originality but not disfigured by mannerisms. The chorus sang rather tamely and without much grip. The second under Sir Henry Wood, was astonishingly perfect, but too mannered. The conductor's sense of detail was as usual so strong that the main outlines of the music were lost sight of. The Birmingham chorus sang magnificently—too well, in fact. Their enormous, rather hard, volume of tone is quite disconcerting to one who expects a chorus to sound like human voices and not like an organ or an assembly of expressive trumpets ; technically, they seemed perfect.

When Nikisch and the Leeds chorus took their turn, the result was different again. Niskisch gets his effects by suavity rather than violence. He humours his orchestra, he does not bully them like Mengelberg. His *tempi* were all over the place, as generally happens when a conductor is striving for an "individual" rendering of anything—but Nikisch has such a strong sense of line that he was able to blend all his vagaries into a logical whole. One may not agree with his details—at any rate they always form part of a perfectly definite conception : if in this case the symphony sounded quite new, the line taken was perfectly clear and consistent—the emphasis was on the human and material side, not on the abstract. The Leeds chorus were not quite so hard and brilliant as the Birmingham chorus, and I was grateful to them because they did not spend all their time making "points." But they have not the same vigour and volume as the others. Nor has Nikisch the same blunt vigour as Mengelberg, though he has more brains than Wood. I should like to hear yet another performance of the Symphony, and I should cast it for Mengelberg, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Birmingham chorus. That would unite virtuosity and power with unequalled control. I am afraid though that we shall never hear the choral part sound anything else than simply inhuman, whereas Beethoven intended it to sound superhuman.

Music

Sir Edward Elgar thoroughly succeeded in swamping the Leeds chorus with his orchestra in "The Music Makers." As for Miss Muriel Foster, she stood no chance whatever : she may have had more to do than to open and shut her mouth at stated intervals, but there was no means of judging. She was only audible twice. If Elgar were not by this time beyond hope as a composer, "The Music Makers" would make one despair : as things are it must be accepted as a normal product of a talent very much on the downgrade.

Debussy has been prominent lately, and it is extraordinarily pleasant to be able to listen to him with the strain of unfamiliarity removed. Mr. Walter Morse Rummel has been playing the second book of Preludes. Covent Garden has given "Pelléas et Mélisande," and Mr. Beecham has produced the orchestral suite "Printemps." Mr. Rummel's sensitive playing of the Preludes made them sound wonderfully clear simply because he suppressed all the irrelevant details. On paper there bristle cascades of notes. With Mr. Rummel they were over and gone almost before they could be realised—an almost inaudible catch of the breath, no more. On the whole the Preludes are unequal. Five are good—"Feuilles mortes," "La Puerta del Vino," "Bruyères," "General Lavine," "Canope." From the point of view of rhythm and colour, "La Puerta del Vino" is the best thing Debussy has done since "La Soirée dans Grenade" (also a *habanera*). On the other hand, he has written nothing before so pointless as "Hommage à S. Pickwick, Esq., P.P.M.P.C." It is neither a good joke nor good music. The rest of the preludes are inclined either to calculated vagueness or to extreme virtuosity. With the exception of two they might all exchange names without anyone being the wiser. The whole of the second book leaves Debussy just a little higher and drier than the first book. That contained nothing so stupid as "Hommage à S. Pickwick, Esq." This has nothing in it that reaches the level of "La Cathédrale Engloutie."

"Pelléas et Mélisande," having once again struggled as far

The Blue Review

as production, was very beautifully performed at Covent Garden. The orchestra never becomes part of the opera until the third act, but the orchestration is bound up with the poem all the time. The actual music itself is so tenuous as to be often negligible, but its colour and the instrumental grouping—in which no instrument is ever used to reinforce, but only for purposes of contrast—are so intimately connected with the remoteness of the persons on the stage that there is a complete fusion between the music and the drama of a kind that Wagner never dreamed of.

There is little to be said for "Printemps." It is unusual for Debussy to be vulgar or commonplace, but here he is both. What used to be charming in the "Petite Suite" is combined with the heavy sense of humour that nowadays makes him think a sham cake-walk the funniest thing in the world. The orchestra were not any more enthusiastic over the Debussy than over Rimsky-Korsakov's "Antar," which they ambled through in a rather dull way. It is arid stuff at best, over-descriptive and yet not realistic enough: about as good as the older type of average Greek play music at the Universities. Mr. Beecham's programmes are so interesting on paper: it is a pity that they sometimes disappoint in performance. Still he is the only conductor who takes a real interest in modern music. Incidentally he has produced a *coloratura* singer in Miss Florence Macbeth, who has a future before her.

LA NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE

*Revue mensuelle de littérature et
de critique publiée chaque mois*

Un article de critique générale—des
vers—un essai ou une nouvelle—un
article de discussion—un roman—des
chroniques régulières—des "Notes,"
courts articles de critique, rédigés par
les collaborateurs de la revue, sur les
manifestations littéraires ou artistiques
qui leur paraissent les plus essentielles.

Fondée par un groupe d'écrivains
que rapprochement de communes ten-
dances, la *Nouvelle Revue Française* a
vu venir à elle, dans le cours de ses
trois premières années, des esprits de
plus en plus divers, mais également
soucieux d'une discipline.

35-37 Rue Madame, Paris (VI^e)

Le numéro 1 fr. 50.

Abonnement annuel 18 fr.

London Agent:

D. NUTT, 212 Shaftesbury Avenue,
W.C.

C U R I O S A

§ If you are interested in *Old, Scarce and Curious Books*, Messrs. Bligh & Co. will be glad to send you their catalogues regularly.

§ A feature is made of *Old Scientific and Medical Works*, but their stock contains many volumes which will appeal to the general collector.

§ *Out-of-the-way Books* and pamphlets which sometimes are apt to get overlooked elsewhere are specially collected.

§ A choice selection of *Antique Pewter* is always on view.

BLIGH & CO., 79 Great Queen
St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

MR. MARTIN SECKER'S
AUTUMN ANNOUNCE-
MENT LIST is Now Ready
and will be sent post free to
any address on application to
him at Number Five John
Street Adelphi London

MARTIN SECKER'S SERIES OF MODERN MONOGRAPHS

J. M. SYNGE	By P. P. Howe
HENRIK IBSEN	By R. Ellis Roberts
THOMAS HARDY	By Lascelles Abercrombie
GEORGE GISSING	By Frank Swinnerton
WILLIAM MORRIS	By John Drinkwater
A. C. SWINBURNE	By Edward Thomas

Each volume Demy Octavo, Cloth Gilt, with a
Frontispiece in Photogravure. Price 7/6 net.

The Athenæum says: "We congratulate the publisher."

The Spectator says: "Mr. Secker's excellent series of critical studies."

The Yorkshire Observer says: "Mr. Secker's admirable series."

The Manchester Courier says: "This excellent series."

The Illustrated London News says: "Mr. Martin Secker's series of critical studies does justice to the publisher's sense of pleasant format. The volumes are a delight to eye and hand, and make a welcome addition to the bookshelf."

MARTIN SECKER PUBLISHER
NUMBER FIVE JOHN STREET ADELPHI LONDON